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LIVE AS YOU OUGHT TO LIVE.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD

Live as you ought to live: not in seclusion,
Hiding yourself from your friend and your foe;
Shutting your doors against kindly intrusion,
Shutting your eyes to the evils below.

Live as you ought to live: not, in derision,
Scorning your fellows and slighting your kind;
Only for self making generous provision,
Only to selfish indulgence inclined.

Live as you ought to live: helping your brother
With kindness or charity, as he has need;
Even the smile that's bestowed on another,
In value the whole of your wealth may exceed.

Live as you ought to live: this your endeavor,
To live like a Christian; not worshipping pelf,
Nor slighting its uses; remembering ever,
That he is the hero who conquers himself.

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A START FOR THE WEST.

Mark Heber returned home from his father's funeral with the problem of his own future pressing upon his thoughts, and demanding a prompt solution.

His home was, and had been from his earliest remembrance, upon a stony, worn-out farm of some fifty acres, situated upon the Seneca Lake, in Western New York. His father had belonged to the old type of farmers, extracting from the land every ounce of substance and returning nothing to it. As a consequence of this treatment, the impoverished land yielded less and less each year, and finally Mr. Heber had become so heavily involved in debt, that some two weeks before his death the farm had been sold by foreclosure of mortgage, and the family had only been allowed to remain upon it until this date by the good-nature of the purchaser.

And now what was Mark to do?

He was a lad of nineteen, slight and boyish in frame, but with the strength of a man in his sinewy arms, and the fleetness of a deer in his legs. He was active, keenwitted, brave as a lion, and as resolute. He had had the usual advantages of education afforded to farmers' sons, having been to school every winter since his early childhood, until the past year, when he had taken his father's place upon the farm, and worked early and late for the support of the family. He understood farming, and he had a theory that the life of a farmer need not be that of a mere tiller of the soil—that it might be ennobled and dignified to the rank of a profession. Certainly his was a noble enthusiasm. Could he make it anything more?

He returned home from his father's grave, as we have said, to the small, unpainted story and a half house, not half a mile distant from, and in full view of the lake, and after him came his father's only brother, a well-to-do farmer, who resided in the neighborhood.

The season was May—some ten years ago. Mark drove around to the little brown rickety stable and stalled his horses, the pride of his boyish soul. He could not return to the desolated house to meet the cold questioning of his worldly uncle, and he turned into the peach orchard, and walked to and fro under the pink and white drift of odorous blossoms, and his brain took up the great problem whose solution must affect his whole life.

He was in the midst of his anxious perplexity, when his uncle came out of the house and joined him.

This uncle, Mr. William Heber, was a man of some sixty years, rather pompous and self-important. He had a large family of children, whom he regarded as so many servants, to whose aid he was entitled until they should attain their majority, and whom he then sent forth into the world penniless, with the benevolent advice to "rely upon their own exertions and prosper." His soul was of the smallest pattern, and he had never been known to do a generous deed, while he had done many mean ones.

It may be supposed, therefore, that Mark did not look for any assistance from him.

"Well, Mark," said his uncle, approaching him with a flushed face and anxious eyes, "I've sent my folks on home, so that I can have a good talk with you. Morgan tells me he wants the farm. He has held off two weeks while George was dying, but he wants to move in next week. What are you going to do?"

The boy turned his troubled face upon his relative. His broad fair brow was knotted with lines of care; his bold blue eyes had a shadow within them to their very depths.

"I don't know, uncle," he said thoughtfully. "I am trying to think. What can I do?"

"I have thought the matter over," said Mr. Heber, "and have thought upon a plan. Let me see. You are nearly nineteen? I am willing to take you, Mark, and treat you as my own son. You shall have a home at my house, and a seat at my table. You are a strong, healthy lad, although you don't look it, and your services will be valuable to me since my son George has run away. What do you say? I offer you a good home until you are twenty-one, and you shall give me your services in payment for it."

The boy's lip curled slightly.

"And what will you do for me when I shall come of age?" he asked.

"I will treat you precisely as I do my own sons," replied Mr. Heber. "I will give you a good freedom suit and a silver watch."

"You forget, uncle, that I have some one to provide for besides myself," said Mark. "Suppose I were to accept this offer of yours, what will you do for Gay?"

"The girl is no relation of yours, Mark. She's only a child of charity that your mother, who was always doing foolish things, adopted out of pity. No wonder that your father run down hill as he did, when he married a dainty school-mistress for a wife, and she couldn't even do a churning without help. She filled her south winders with flowers, and played the melodeon, and read books and newspapers, and was so dreadful refined and finified, that she was enough to drag a man to poverty, although I will say for her that she worked at farm work beyond her strength, and dropped off at last through being clean tired out. But what did your father want to marry an ambitious, weakly sort of girl for? And what an odd notion of hers to name a girl Gay! If it had been Prudence now, or Temperance, or Charity—but Gay! A person has no right to be gay in this here sinful, sorrowin' world."

The boy sighed.

"Poor little Gay is well named," he said, "although hers is a hard lot. But mother did not name her, Uncle William. Do you not remember how the child came by her name? It is thirteen years this spring since a lady—"

"A tramp, you mean," interrupted Mr. Heber.

"She was on foot, and carried a baby in her arms," said Mark, "but she was nevertheless a lady. Her worn and ragged clothes had been of rich material, and she wore jewelry of value. She stopped at our door and asked leave to remain over night. She was thin and white, and there was a wild look in her eyes that told that her mind was not right. Mother said she could stay, and waited on her and fed her and her child. The next day she did not go away, and mother had not the heart to send her. She staid on day after day, growing weaker and weaker. It did not take long to discover that she was insane—not violently so, but still insane. She called the child Gay, and sometimes Gabrielle, which is Gay's true name. But she did not tell her surname, nor anything concerning herself. Mother could not bear to send her to the almshouse, and kept her to the last. Late that summer she died, in my mother's arms, and left the child to us; and we have always regarded Gay as a sacred legacy. Even in her last moments the lady could not explain the mystery surrounding her. She was refined and educated, and we thought that she had wandered off from her home and husband in a fit of insanity, or else that she was suddenly bereft of home and friends. No one ever came to inquire after her or the child. There was some strange mystery about her, and that mystery may yet darken Gay's life, or she may live to solve it."

"Not much danger of that," said Mr. Heber gruffly. "Her mother was a tramp, a little better than the common; but a crazy tramp, and nothing more. No wonder George was behindhand, when his wife took in tramps and fed them for a whole summer, and adopted the child of a tramp and brought her up a lady."

Mark colored.

"I cannot hear a word against my mother, sir," he said. "I bless her for giving me so sweet a sister as little Gay. The child is fourteen years old, Uncle William. If I accept your proposition as regards myself, what will you do for her?"

"The child is of no more use than that daisy there," said Mr. Heber. "She can't earn her salt. Under such circumstances, I don't feel called upon to take her. She'll have to go to the poor-house, where she ought to have been sent years ago."

Mark's blue eyes flashed.

"What!" he cried. "You would send that dainty little lady—for she is one—to a poor-house, to herd with the lazy, the improvident, the dissolute, the imbecile? For shame, Uncle William. I shall protect Gay while I live, and she shall not be separated from me."

"Then I wash my hands of you," exclaimed Mr. Heber angrily. "You can go your own way, and get your own living. If you stick to that pauper, I am done with you."

"Very well, sir," said Mark quietly, the color deepening in his boyish face; "that is settled then. Even if I had been inclined to accept your offer for myself, which I was not, I cannot now do so."

"Then what will you do?"

"I have a little property to dispose of, and I owe only a hundred and fifty dollars in the world," said Mark. "Seventy dollars of that amount is due the doctor. Most of the rest is due the undertaker. I own a pair of horses that we raised ourselves, and I broke and trained, and I mean to get five hundred dollars for them. They are of fine stock, and promise to be fast."

"Five hundred fiddlesticks!" ejaculated Mr. Heber. "Who'll be fool enough to pay five hundred dollars for a pair of five-year olds?"

"I was offered that for them in Geneva two weeks ago," explained Mark. "I am going to take them to the gentleman to-morrow, and tell him he can have them at that price. Then there's that yoke of steers. I mean to get a hundred and thirty dollars for them—"

"I'll give you a hundred," interrupted Mr. Heber, with some eagerness. "I want them steers, Mark. I've calculated on them. If you sell them to some one else, you may have to take paper on long time, but I'll give you cash."

"I'll take it," said Mark promptly. "I shall make a vendue and sell off the house furniture, the plows, and drags, and mowing-machine, the lumber-wagon, the democrat and the carryall, and all the odds and ends. Morgan can have the house next week."

"I'll take care of your money for you," said Mr. Heber. "You'll have over a thousand dollars, all told; an awful sum for a boy of your age. There's no guardeen appointed, but I'm willing to be your guardeen."

"I'll be my own guardian, Uncle William. I am old for my age, and can manage for myself. Father made a will, and gave me the property absolutely. It was his last advice to me to take Gay and go West, and settle on some of the rich western land. Father said if he had gone West years ago, when he had the western fever, he should have been a rich man. A man has a chance to grow out West. If I stay here, I shall be only Mark Heber to the end of my days; but out in the great West I may grow to be a Governor, or Senator, or somebody of consequence any how. I wanted to give Gay a couple of years' schooling at Ovid or Geneva, and that made me hesitate about setting out for the West at once."

"That's a good idee—that of going West," said Mr. Heber reflectively. "Since you're bound to keep your money in your own hands, you'd better go West. If you should lose your money by any accident, I should not feel called upon to help you. There's no place for a young man like the West. But why not leave the girl here at school?"

"If she should be sick, I should have to come back at any expense," said Mark. "I don't like to leave her among strangers. Besides, I shall need her company. She's a splendid little housekeeper, and a fine scholar. I can teach myself, and teach her, I suppose, if I try. I shall take her with me, uncle."

"Remember, if you do go, I wash my hands of you," declared Mr. Heber decisively. "You'll get took in with swamp land, or get scalped by Injuns, or die of fever; but it's all your own look out. Remember that."

"I will remember. I mean to squat on land until I get suited, and then pre-empt a farm," said Mark. The Government gives every man a farm that is willing to work it and live on it. When I come of age, I can pre-empt, you know, and my money will stock the farm, and build and furnish a house. I mean to be a good, honest, industrious citizen, and in twenty years I hope to be Governor of some Western State."

"That would be luck. Well, Mark, I hope you will be lucky."

"I shall be," replied Mark, in a tone of quiet determination. "What is luck? If honesty, well-directed energy, perseverance and industry bring success, you will call that success luck? So be it, Uncle William. You shall find that I shall be lucky."

The old farmer shook his head.

"You won't be lucky if you start out in life with a pauper girl hanging like a dead weight to your coat tails," he said ominously.

"Do not call Gay a pauper, uncle. What is mine is hers. And I have a strange presentiment," said Mark, "that the greatest 'luck' of all my life will come to me through little Gay."

"It'll come when her relations turn up rich and grand," said the old man, with something of a sneer. "You've made your bed, Mark, and if it turns out hard you'll have to lie in it all the same. If you need help, don't come to me, that's all!"

Mark was on the point of promising, with some bitterness, that he would not apply to his uncle for assistance in any case, when a light wagon, in which two men were seated, was seen to stop before the house, and one of the men alighted and disappeared within the shadow of the humble latticed porch.

"Looks like Morgan," said Mr. Heber. "I dare say he's come to see for himself how soon you'll get out."

"He is in haste," said the boy bitterly.

At this moment a young girl, a mere child, came running out of the house toward the orchard, moving with the lightness and fleetness of a gazelle. As she neared the uncle and nephew, she slackened her speed to a dancing sort of walk.

This was the child Gay—known as Gay Heber, her own name being unknown—the child of an insane wandering woman, who had died at the Heber farm-house thirteen years before. This was the little "pauper" whom Mr. Heber had demanded should be sent to the county alms-house.

She was a slender, brown-eyed girl of fourteen years, with dark hair cropped close to her small head like a boy's; with a small, witching face, a tender mouth vivid with scarlet, and a clear brown complexion. She looked as if she had been lately weeping, as indeed she had; but one glance into the bright, electric eyes and mignonne face declared that hers was a bright and sunny disposition, all sweetness and gayety. She was a pure, innocent, radiant little being, all warmth and sunshine, and Mark Heber would rather have died than put her from him as his uncle counselled.

The boy's face brightened as she came near. She approached him, and he laid his big red hand on her dusky head, with a smile breaking through the gloom of his countenance.

"What is it, Gay?" he asked, his voice softening, as it always did when he spoke to her. "Is Morgan here?"

"No, it's a gentleman from Geneva," answered Gay, in tones as sweet and pure as those of a flute. "He has come to get your answer about the horses, Mark."

"I must go in, uncle," said the boy. "I will come out again presently."

"I must go home," said Mr. Heber. "I'll come to-morrow and pay for the steers, and take them away. The women folks want some things out of your house, I believe, so they will come over with me."

The old man turned and strode away, and as he went he reproached himself for having offered over sixty dollars for the steers, which sum he now persuaded himself that Mark would have taken.

Mark and Gay returned to the house.

The visitor proved to be the gentleman who had seen Mark's horses at Geneva, a fortnight before, and who had come to examine and buy them, if they answered his expectations. Mark took him, with his companion, to the old barn, and the horses were examined thoroughly, after which they were harnessed and driven for a mile or more upon the road.

After an hour or more of bargaining, the horses were sold, and Mark had five hundred dollars in good money in his pocket-book.

The next day he sold his steers to his uncle and received the money for them, but he was obliged to "throw in" a harness and some smaller articles before the grasping old farmer was at all satisfied. Upon the same day he disposed of bedding of nearly every description, retaining the use of a portion for a week, and for this he realized the sum of fifty dollars more.

Upon the same day, also, he discharged every cent of his indebtedness, and caused to be printed at the nearest town handbills of his projected vendue, and these, during the next day or two, he posted up in the village a mile or two from his home, and about the country.

Before the day appointed for the vendue, nearly all his household goods were disposed of. A neighbor offered to act as auctioneer, and at the vendue every article belonging to Mark, save the few things he had decided to retain, were sold. They brought scarcely so much as had been expected, being sold for cash; but upon the night after the sale, our young hero had in his pocket-book over nine hundred dollars in money.

"It's not a bad start in the world," said Mark to himself cheerfully, as he lay that night in his little room for the last time. "I can fritter it away, or I can make it the foundation of a great fortune. I must remember my father's words, that 'honesty, industry, perseverance and uprightness bring luck.' It's a great step to take—to go away from home and friends and everybody I've known, to try a new life; but 'nothing venture, nothing have.' Better any kind of life with Gay than riches without her. Dear little Gay! We have only each other in all the world. I wonder—I wonder if we shall ever solve the mystery that surrounds her identity?"

Upon the morning after the sale, Mr. Morgan's household goods began to arrive at an early hour. The effects of the young couple, consisting of a few chests of clothing, bed and table linen, blankets, etc., the family Bible and other books, were set out in the yard, and about nine o'clock Mr. Heber's lumber wagon appeared to convey Mark and Gay to Geneva, with their incumbrances.

That evening the young pair set out for the great West, by way of Rochester, Detroit, Chicago and Leavenworth, their destination not decided upon, but bound, like the children in the fairy tales, "to seek their fortune."

For some, the great West has in store wealth, honors and all good things, while for others it has toils, hardships, anxieties and early death. What fate had it in reserve for our young adventurers?

CHAPTER II.

MARK'S FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE RED MAN.

The young travellers arrived at Leavenworth in due time, after a long and fatiguing journey, but in good health and spirits. Leaving Gay at their hotel, upon the morning after their arrival Mark went out into the streets, with a mind intent upon business.

His first discovery was that Leavenworth was the great starting-point for wagon trains bound for the plains. Here emigrant wagons were manufactured and sold to intending emigrants, and here the trains were formed; the trains being simply a greater or lesser number of wagons setting out together, for the purposes of joint protection from hostile Indians on the route.

Mark went down to a great yard where fifty long, hooded wagons stood in rows, and examined one wagon after another with shrewd, practical eyes, fixing upon one at last that conformed entirely to his ideas of strength and durability.

It was indeed a beautiful wagon for the purpose for which it had been designed. The strong poles, the broad tires on the heavy wheels, the cumbrous box painted a bright red, the long white canvas hood that protected every inch of the interior, were each and all perfect of their kind. And there were hooks underneath the box, upon which to hang baskets, buckets and kettles, and drawers under the driver's seat, and a host of conveniences that struck Mark as being the perfection of ingenuity and elegance.

"I shall want a pair of stout oxen," said the boy reflectively. "What will you furnish the whole outfit for, wagon and oxen, the beasts to be young, sound and kind?"

The wagon dealer made an estimate, and Mark was in the midst of his bargaining, displaying a shrewdness not less than that of the dealer, when a stranger entered the yard and came toward the pair.

This stranger was the realization of Mark's ideal of a Kansas farmer. He was rough-looking and rough-bearded. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, stout gray garments, and trowsers tucked into a pair of formidable looking boots. Despite the roughness of his appearance, there was an earnestness in his manner and gait, and an honest expression on his countenance, that impressed Mark favorably at first sight.

The wagon dealer and the farmer exchanged salutations in a manner that proved them old acquaintances.

"What has brought you back to Leavenworth, Whitman?" inquired the dealer. "I supposed you were getting rich out on your farm. How is that?"

Whitman shook his head.

"I've had a drouth for two seasons, and my crops haven't even come up. The creeks are all dry in my neighborhood, and there promises to be a drouth again this year, so I concluded to move out. Western Kansas don't suit me, and a dozen farmers who lived within twenty miles of me are abandoning their farms also."

Mark's countenance fell.

"I was going to Western Kansas," he said.

The farmer looked at the slender boy, and a broad smile passed over his features.

"You?" he said. "Oh, your folks, I suppose you mean? Is your father a farmer?"

"My father is dead," answered Mark, "and I have come West with the idea of squatting on government land to which I can get a deed after I come of age. I have only my little sister to provide for, and I concluded to come out here and grow up with some new community."

"A good idea," said Mr. Whitman. "If you were only a little older now—but I won't say anything to discourage you. If you know how to work and are willing to work, you can make a fortune out here. Is your mind fixed upon any particular part of the State, any neighborhood?"

"No," said Mark, "only I prefer to start a settlement, rather than to settle in one already started."

Mr. Whitman laughed, but applauded the sentiment.

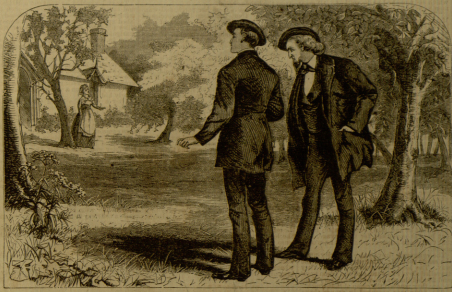
"That's my idea," he said, "but I am now going up into Nebraska. I had a letter lately from an old neighbor of mine who moved up to Nebraska a year ago, and he raises splendid crops, and he says the climate is fine, and there is no lack of water. He is on the Platte river, five miles from any neighbor. The country up there is bound to grow, and some day there'll be a railroad through the State, though none of us may live to see it. I hear they talk of running a road through to California some day, and they are sure to run through Nebraska."

"If you've not decided where to go, my lad," said the wagon dealer, "you can't do better than to go along with Whitman. He came from the same town with me in the East, and I have always known him as an honorable man and a prosperous farmer. His advice will be worth money to you."

Mark had no decided preferences in regard to the place of his future settlement. One part of the great West was nearly the same as another to him. His own judgment approved the wagon dealer's commendation of Whitman, whose kindly soul looked from his rugged face, and he was inclined to accept Whitman's experience as his own, and to go to Nebraska with him. Yet, as he would do nothing rashly or without forethought, he held a long and earnest consultation with the farmer in regard to the rival States. Kansas and Nebraska had each their advantages. Either offered wealth and material good to the settler within its borders, but after due deliberation, and a perusal of the letter from Whitman's friend, Mark decided to cast in his lot with that of Whitman, so far as to accompany him to Nebraska.

"Our train is already formed," said Mr.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1872, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS, AT WASHINGTON.



MARK HEBER ACQUAINTS HIS UNCLE WITH HIS DETERMINATION TO GO WEST.

Whitman. "Trains with less than twenty wagons are not allowed to pass beyond Fort Kearney, on account of the Indians, and we may be detained there to make up a full train, there being but seven wagons in our company. We have a first-rate guide, named Landford, and are all well armed. Our wagons are camped at Salt Creek, three miles from here, and you will want to drive out to-night and camp with us, so that we can start at daybreak—unless you desire to wait here longer."

"I can be ready by to-night," said Mark. "The sooner we start, the less I shall have to pay for hotel expenses. My sister is at the Planters'."

"You will have to buy your outfit, if you have not already done so," said the farmer. "You have contracted for your team and wagon, but there are other things to be got that are fully as necessary. I will assist you in buying, if you choose to avail yourself of my experience."

Mark gladly accepted the offer, and bought and paid for his oxen and wagon, showing comparatively but a small portion of his funds in doing so. Then he went out into the streets with his new friend, intent upon buying his outfit.

His first purchases were a good double-barrelled rifle, a pair of revolvers, and a small five-barrelled revolving pistol which he intended to present to Gay.

"That 's right," said Whitman approvingly, as Mark explained his purpose. "You can't always be with your sister, and you 'll feel safer about her if she can defend herself in case of need. But has the girl got spunk enough to fire a pistol with her eyes open?"

"I think so," answered Mark, smiling. "She 's small and delicate, but she 's as brave as a man."

The next purchase of the young emigrant comprised a variety of agricultural implements; and the next was a fine, sturdy cow. He bought also a couple of young pigs, which were inclosed in a well-ventilated box.

Mark's love for his adopted sister led him into one or two extravagances, at which Mr. Whitman gravely shook his head. These extravagances consisted of a small armed rocking-chair, and a whole piece of dainty figured chintz, which the clever fingers of little Gay were expected to form into chair and lounge coverings, and the like.

Then, by Mr. Whitman's advice, Mark bought a barrel of crackers, a barrel of flour, a sack of meal, a barrel of sugar, a bag of coffee, a few pounds of tea, a supply of rice, a "kit" of salt mackerel, and a host of other necessaries.

He also bought seeds of various kinds, a few standard books, writing and sewing materials, some pieces of white muslin, both plain and figured, and a couple pair of cheap blankets; also some cheap, yet serviceable goods, to be made up by Gay into suits for himself and her.

These goods were all transferred to the great emigrant wagon, and carefully packed in. Buckets, baskets and cooking utensils were hung underneath the wagon. Matches and ammunition were packed under the driver's seat, and, as an after-thought, a few simple medicines were procured and stowed away securely.

By the time these preparations were concluded it was five o'clock in the afternoon. The oxen were in the outfitter's yard, and were all that could be desired. Mark had not seen Gay since the morning, and gladly turned his weary feet toward the Planters' Hotel, Mr. Whitman accompanying him.

As they advanced along the hotel corridor, Gay's door suddenly opened, and Gay's small dusky head was protruded. A look of anxious inquiry was on her small eager face; but at sight of Mark a radiant glow replaced it, and she came dancing out to meet him, all smiles and gayety.

"Oh, Mark!" she cried breathlessly. "Why didn't you come back to dinner? I was afraid something had happened to you. I was just beginning to think of going out to find you."

Mark put his arm around the child's slender waist and walked with her into their small room, Mr. Whitman following.

"I have been busy all day," he said. "Gay, this is a new friend of ours, Mr. Whitman. We are going up into Nebraska with him, and shall start in the morning. We shall leave the hotel after supper. Mr. Whitman, this is my sister, Gay Heber."

Gay made a bewitching little courtesy. Mr. Whitman smiled down upon her indulgently, as he would have smiled upon a dainty kitten.

"You don't mean, Mr. Heber," he exclaimed, "that you are going to take that delicate little creeter out onto the frontier to rough it? You 'd better leave her here at school. That 's my advice."

"But I won't be left, sir," said Gay, a saucy light glowing in her spirited brown eyes, and a gay smile flickering about her scarlet mouth. "I am going to be a girl pioneer. I am as brave for my size as anybody, and what is more," and she shook her little dusky cropped head in the most decided manner, "Mark can't get along without me. Girls and women are needed 'out west,' as much as boys and men."

"So they are," said Mr. Whitman admiringly, "and I won't say any more against your going. You 're clear grit any how, just like your brother, though you don't look like him."

Gay colored a little. She had long known of the mystery that attached to her. In a small country neighborhood, like that in which all her life since her first year had been passed, her history could not have been kept a secret from her, had gentle Mrs. Heber desired to so keep it. The school children had taunted her with being the child of a "crazy tramp," and old women had gossipped over the fact in mysterious whispers, in her very presence. She had accepted the facts as such, and not to be lamented over, and by her brightness, sweetness, and goodness, had "lived down" the odium that would otherwise most probably have clung to her, even in the democratic back country neighborhood where so much of her life had been spent.

Mark did not deem it necessary to enlighten his new friend in regard to Gay's origin, and made some pleasant response to Whitman's remark, and invited him to be seated.

"Did you go down to dinner to-day, Gay?" inquired Mark, drawing the girl to his side.

"Certainly," answered the näive little creature, with an assured air. "When the gong sounded, I went down to the dining-room, and was waited upon just like anybody. I thought it likely you would be detained. Mr. Whitman, have you any family?" she inquired, turning with quiet good-breeding to entertain the burly good-natured guest.

"I have a wife and seven children, Miss," answered Whitman. "They are out at the camp, three miles from here. After your supper here, we are all going out to the camp, you, your brother, and I."

The supper gong was presently sounded, and Mark invited his new friend to remain and share the meal with them.

After supper, the boy settled his hotel bill, and found, upon a private examination of his pocket-book, that he had two hundred and fifty dollars remaining of his funds.

Mr. Whitman went out for a dray to remove Mark's chests, and during his absence the boy divided his money into two equal portions, giving half to Gay, and concealing half upon his own person.

"If anything should happen to me at any time, Gay," he said seriously, "the money you have got there will keep you from starvation until you can get something to do. Keep it carefully. I may have to borrow it for the purchase of stock some day, but you shall have it back again. A share of all my earnings shall be yours. If you share my toils and perils, you shall share my gains."

Gay carefully secreted the roll of money upon her small person, remarking gravely:

"So, if my father should ever turn up, Mark—though, of course, he won't—he 'll find me quite an heiress, for we are sure to get rich out here. I suppose, though, Mark, that when we left the old home, we left behind all chance of ever finding out who I am. And perhaps it 's better so. So long as I don't know who my father is, I shall think of him as a tall gentleman who wears store clothes every day, and white shirts with bosoms in, and perhaps—yes, certainly—a gold watch. But if he should turn up, and should prove to be a tramp himself, or something of that sort, I should think of the old lines: 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'twere folly to be wise.'"

Mark did not reply save by a smile, for at that moment the heavy tramp of Mr. Whitman was heard in the hall. The farmer appeared and announced that a dray was waiting at the door, and that porters would immediately remove the baggage. He had scarcely made the announcement, when two colored porters appeared, and proceeded to carry down the heavy wooden chests, which were loaded on th dray.

Mark assisted Gay to a perch upon the red chest, in which were stored sheets, pillow-cases, table-cloths, and a few treasured patch-work quilts. Mr. Whitman seated himself, and Mark stood up at the end of the dray. In this manner the cart, drawn by two stout horses, toiled up the rugged street.

"I wonder," said Gay, with an infectious laugh, and a droll look in her brown eyes, "if some day we shall see in the school readers a picture of how 'Governor Heber' of Nebraska rode out of Leavenworth on a dray. I've seen a picture of Franklin walking along a street of Philadelphia with a loaf of bread under each arm, and a third loaf in his hand, which he munched as he walked. All great men have humble beginnings, they say."

"This is not as humble as it might be," said Mark, "but it is humble enough. I can hardly believe I am the Seneca county boy who has dreamed for years of going West. I've grown ten years since we left home, Gay."

"If you grow with such tremendous jumps," said sharp little Gay, "you 'll soon die of old-age, Mark, and leave me alone in the wilderness."

Mr. Whitman laughed, and said:

"You are wide awake, Miss Gay, and no mistake. You'll be almost as much help to Mark here as if you were his brother, instead of his sister. You have a boy's courage, and, indeed, you look like a boy."

Gay put her hand to her little cropped head.

"It's on account of my hair," she said. "I like to wear it this way, and I think," she added quaintly, "that the Western frontier is not the most profitable or convenient place in which to cultivate a full growth of hair. I don't want to make so great a display as to tempt the noble red man."

With this sort of conversation the ride to the wagon yard was shortened. On arriving, Gay examined the big wagon, with loud expressions of appreciation, and the chests were loaded in, in the space that had been left for them. The oxen were yoked and attached to the wagon, and Gay mounted and sat upon a barrel behind the driver's seat. Mark and Mr. Whitman ascended to their places, and the boy, flourishing his whip, drove triumphantly out of the yard into the street.

And then, with a proud thrill at his heart, he felt that he had fairly entered upon life—that he was embarked for the voyage, and that God alone knew at what port he would anchor.

The emigrants drove out of the city upon the sandy road, Mr. Whitman indicating the way. The long clear twilight fell as they travelled slowly onward, and the moon arose and flooded the prairie with its silvery light before they reached the camp at Salt Creek.

The camp was arranged in proper shape, the seven wagons being "parked," in the form of a circle—that is, the pole of one wagon resting upon the rear of another—and the oxen, mules, horses, cows, dogs and pigs being gathered into the circle thus protected.

This precaution, so necessary on the plains, was of course unnecessary here; but the conductor of the train, Mr. Landford, had a love of order and method, and insisted on beginning as he meant to keep on.

Outside the circle of wagons a great fire was burning, and around it forms were hovering, reminding one who was familiar with Shakespeare, of the witches in Macbeth. But the men, women and children looked happy and content in their free gipsy life, and Gay thought she should like to join them.

As Mark's wagon drove up and came to a halt, the emigrants thronged around in eager curiosity. Mr. Whitman sprang to the ground, and assisted Gay to her feet, introducing to her his rotund, motherly wife and his seven dirty, rollicking children, whose ages ranged from one year to seventeen.

There was not a grain of bashfulness in Gay's nature. She was well-bred, courteous, and delicately mannered, and she acknowledged the introduction to Mrs. Whitman with a graceful little courtesy, and smiled so saucily into the faces of the Whitman children that she won their devoted friendship at once.

The conductor of the train, Mr. Landford, came forward and welcomed the new-comers. He was going out as far as Denver, had made the journey many times, and knew every inch of the way. Mark and Gay shook hands with him, and Mark introduced himself at greater length, telling who he was, and from what place he had come.

There were six remaining families, one to each wagon. Mr. Landford rode on horseback usually, and stored his luggage in his saddle-bags. These six families, named respectively Halsey, Amory, Hopkins, Arnold, Knox, and Brown, averged five members to each, and more introductions were effected, and a hearty welcome was extended to the new-comers.

In fact, the boy and girl were made to feel that they were among friends at the very outset. The ring was extended to admit Mark's wagon, and his oxen, cow and pigs were admitted into the inclosure formed by the wagons, while he and Gay were invited to a seat on the ground near the fire, and to a share in the general merriment.

Who that has been upon the wide Kansas prairies does not remember with a thrill of delight the springing turf, the wild, fresh breezes, the far prospect, the bending blue of the heaven, the sparkle and glow of the stars at night, the brilliancy of the moonlight, and best of all, the pure clear air, in which one can see objects at the distance of miles?

It seemed to Gay and to Mark that they had entered a new and wondrous world—a world fuller of beauty than any of which they had dreamed.

Both lay long awake that night in their wagon, close up under the canvas roof, and they talked in whispers of their great future, and wondered what it had in store for them.

The next morning at daybreak the camp was astir.

The young emigrants crept out and found all was bustle and activity. Fires were burning, kettles were boiling, children were playing, dogs were barking, babies were crying, and all the sounds of camp life were blended into one general confusion.

Gay begged a corner of Mrs. Whitman's fire, and having washed her face and hands, and combed her hair, she proceeded to get breakfast for herself and Mark. The boy filled the kettle with water, and Gay made coffee, and fried ham in her new frying-pan, which possessed a handle nearly as long as herself; and with a loaf of bread brought from Leavenworth, they had a breakfast to which they did full justice.

While the women were washing their dishes and pans, the men yoked their oxen, and Mr. Landford saddled his horse. By sunrise the wagon train was on its way toward the north-west.

The journey over the sea-like expanse was full of incident to our young pioneers. The route, soon after leaving Leavenworth, became marked with the bleaching bones and the carcasses of mules and oxen. The black soil, covered with fine herbage, was dotted with flowers which at the East are cultivated in gardens, roses, pinks, lilies, sweet-williams, and phlox, with others equally luxuriant and beautiful. Birds too were plentiful, and their songs and flights through the clear air were delightful to Gay. Then ox teams and mule teams were frequently encountered, and salutations between drivers were exchanged. A part of the time Mark walked and drove his oxen with a goad, while Gay sat high up on the seat and chattered like a magpie.

At night they halted beside a small stream and parked the wagons, and had supper, and talked and sang songs and told stories, like one great joyous family.

At daybreak again they were on the way.

In the course of ten days, having travelled rapidly for ox teams, they reached the Little Blue river, a branch of the Big Blue. Here they found delicious shade of trees on the river bank, and Gay thought that she would be contented to remain here for ever.

They reached the river about sunset of a lovely June day. The wagons were parked. The animals and men rushed to the water, for the air was sultry. A strong breeze was blowing, but it was full of a burning heat that parched and withered, rather than refreshed.

The prospect was magnificent. The horizon lay in the far distance clearly defined. The blue dome of heaven closed down upon the level, sea-like prairie, upon which the wrecks of wagons, the bones of oxen and mules, broken utensils, and other dead or worn out relics of past trains, lay strewn. The boundless vista on every side, the magnificent sweep of vision, held Gay entranced. It was a glorious solitude—a primeval wilderness—full of solemn and awful beauty, fresh and pure as it came from the hands of God.

Gay crept down from her perch, and wandered away from the camp in a species of ecstasy. The children, with shouts of glee, played by the river and plucked flowers from the shrubs overhanging the streams. The women built fires and began the preparation of supper. The men proceeded to park the wagons.

"The last train I took over this route was attacked by Indians just here," said Conductor Landford. "They were unusually bold, and we had a tough fight— Good Heavens! What is that?"

He sprang up to a wagon box, and raising his field glass, swept a long, keen glance to the westward.

He beheld, by the last rays of the sunset, a mounted band of Indians, their weapons glittering in the yellow light, their plumes nodding in the wind, as they came on like a whirlwind.

They were five miles away, and seemed not half a mile. Their purpose was evident. They were bearing down upon the tired emigrants and half-unformed train.

"*Indians!*" yelled the conductor, in a voice that made every woman's face turn white. "Pawnees or Sioux, I can't tell which. They seem to be on the war-path. I can see their weapons They outnumber us, counting in our women. Call in the children. We shall have to defend ourselves."

He blew a shrill blast on his bugle, that rang out far and wide. Gay, a quarter of a mile away upon the flower-spread prairie, heard the startling call, and looked back at the camp. All was panic and confusion there. She looked toward the west, with a sudden sense of peril to be apprehended from that quarter, and beheld approaching the band of savages, in all their panoply of war. They were sweeping down upon the train, with whoops and yells, murder and rapine in their very aspect.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

NOBODY---A FAIRY TALE.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

In the days when fairies were—like many other beautiful things, they have quite vanished from the face of the earth in this our century—there lived in a certain fairy castle four little spinster fairies who had never so much as thought of marrying. They lived with their father, a white-headed old fairy, and he was extremely proud and fond of them. How many centuries had passed since these little fairy damsels first crept out of the cups of lilies and the hearts of roses I don't know. Fairy damsels never grow old—never, never, never. To say, "She is a thousand years old," was not to say of one of them, "She is no longer young and lovely." These were all lovely, but, like everything else, they were beautiful in comparative degrees: Beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful!

Their names were Rose, Sunbeam, Eagletta and Nobody, for fairies had odd names in those days, as indeed had other people.

Rose was named after the loveliest flower on earth, because she was the loveliest thing ever seen. There was no fault to find with her from head to foot. You never saw a little marble statuette so daintily modelled, and she had, besides, all the flesh and color and freshness of a little child. I cannot tell you just how pretty she was, for I do not understand the fairy language.

Sunbeam was lovely too, and she was witty. She laughed and sparkled incessantly. She was always playing some merry prank, and making even the old King, her father, laugh until his sides shook.

As for Eagletta, she was not so lovely as the others, though she was lovely enough; but she was the most accomplished fairy under the sun. She played upon the little fairy harp, about as big as your thumb, all the songs known in fairy-land. She danced like a zephyr. I am very sure that if she had lived in these days, she would have perched herself upon a mushroom in the forest some fine day and have given her sister fairies a lecture. Rather a strong-minded fairy, in fact, as fairies went.

As for Nobody, she was pretty—all fairy maidens were—but not unusually so. She could laugh, but she did not flash and sparkle like Sunbeam. And as for all Eagletta's accomplishments, she had not one. She did a thousand commonplace things that no one even knew she did, and she thought it extremely just that she should be called Nobody. She did not mind it in the least.

Now, one day, when no one was expecting anything—a day so hot that the fairies cared for nothing but to lie upon the grass under the ferns, and fan themselves with bees' wings—there came, riding full speed upon a grasshopper, a little fairy courier all clad in green. He had a trumpet flower in his hand, and when he stopped at the old King's palace, he began to play upon it—"tra lal la! tra lal la! tra lal la!" And the old King hearing it, came out to his gate, and seeing that he was an ambassador of some importance, begged him to walk in, and rest and refresh himself.

"Thanks," said the courier, "I cannot stop. I am in haste. I have news for you, however. The son of the King of all the fairies is now of age, and is about to set out upon his travels in search of a wife. He will visit every king who has daughters, and as he understands that you have three—"

"Well, I have four," said the King; "but, to be sure, one is only little Nobody."

"Well," said the courier, "as you have daughters, he is extremely anxious to call upon you among the rest. We have heard at court that the Fairy Rose is very beautiful."

"Well, sir," said the king, "it is not for me to say but she is. My own fine management in feeding her on nothing but dew was, I believe, the cause. And—"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the messenger. "My grasshopper is growing impatient. All I have to say is, that a king who has one daughter celebrated all over the world for beauty, another whose wit and merriment are proverbial, and still another whose talents are immense, need not despair of forming an alliance with the King of all the Fairies. Adieu."

His grasshopper gave a great leap, and he vanished in the shadows of the wood. The old King went into his castle in a tremendous state of excitement.

"I have wonderful news," he cried, "very wonderful news. The son of the King of all the fairies is coming here to marry one of you."

"Which one?" screamed the fairy girls in chorus.

"I don't know," said the fairy papa.

"How provoking!" said Rose.

"How ridiculous!" said Sunbeam.

"What a want of good sense!" said Eagletta. "Why didn't you ask which?"

"Well, really," said the King, "he don't know himself. He's coming to choose—that's all."

"Impudence!" cried the fairy maidens. But presently they recovered from their wrath, and Rose ran away to find butterflies' wings to make herself a dress of, and Sunbeam practiced all her cunning pranks in her own little nook of the castle. And Eagletta set to work to practice on the harp, and said, over and over again to herself, that the Prince's choice was certain to be the most intellectual.

Meanwhile Nobody sat herself down to think.

"It is certain," she said, "that this young Prince will not choose me. If he wants beauty, there is Rose; sprightliness, there is Sunbeam; accomplishments, there is Eaglet. Now I had better put all question of adorning myself aside, and see to those things no one else ever remembers, the castle and the dinner."

Then she went out and called to her the little black gnome who served the fairy King's family—he was by no means a rich King, you must understand—and consulted with him.

The end was that he went out with his bow and arrow, and rod and line, to catch humming-birds and gold-fish; while Nobody polished up the family belongings, got some pond lilies for table-cloths, made a new carpet of marigolds; and for the room the Prince was to sleep in, made a little bed of thistle-down, with white rose leaves for sheets, and a big peony leaf for a counterpane.

Then, when the house was all arranged, she went into the kitchen and roasted her humming-bird to a turn, and fried her gold-fish brown, and made her little loaves of pollen bread—never dressing herself in anything fine, but putting on a violet leaf pinafore that nearly hid her.

After a while she heard the tra lal la! tra lal la! again, and just peeped out to see three big black beetles drag a little golden carriage into the court-yard, and to hear the herald's trumpet sound, and to see all the fairy caps come off as the Prince stepped out.

What a wonderful Prince he was—dressed from head to foot in purple and diamonds. His fairy golden hair fell about his face in curls, and, ah, how blue his eyes were!

"Ah, well," said little Nobody to herself, "some day some commonish sort of a prince, good enough for me, will come along and like me, perhaps; but such a prince as *this*, O dear, no!" And she went on with her cooking.

The Prince walked into the castle meanwhile, and the first thing that he saw was Rose in her robe of butterflies' wings. She made a courtesy to him, and he made one to her.

"She certainly is the most beautiful creature I ever saw," he said to the King, who rubbed his hands, and said:

"Thank you, your Highness."

Then they walked on into the castle, and at every step the Prince cried:

"How charming everything is! How it all glitters and shines! Certainly somebody has been polishing things up, and taking a great deal of trouble to make all this marigold carpeting."

"Well," said the King, "that is Nobody, I suppose. I have a fourth daughter, not as beautiful, nor as witty, nor as talented as her sisters, and *she* does the little things, and attends to the domestic matters. I suppose it amuses her."

Then before the Prince could speak, there was Sunbeam.

Oh, how she laughed and talked that day! How she sparkled and shone!

At last the Prince turned to the King.

"What a fortunate person you are," he said. "If your first daughter is the most beautiful, this one is the most fascinating I ever met. Charming! truly charming!"

"He'll choose me," said Sunbeam to herself as she flitted away.

"This is to be your apartment," said the King to the Prince of all the Fairies.

"Heavens! what a delightful room!" said the Prince. "What a charming bed! What taste in the arrangement! This peony counterpane, these poppy-flower pillows, this thistle-down bed! Such delightful country home life about it all!"

"Well, you see," said the King, "my little Nobody really has nothing else to do, so she attended to it."

"Hark!" cried the Prince. "What music!"

"It is my daughter Eagletta, playing upon the harp, your Highness," said the King.

"I adore music," said the Prince. "Conduct me to her."

And from that moment until dinner time the Prince of all the fairies sat at the feet of Eagletta, and listened to her playing and her conversation.

"I knew that intellect would triumph," said Eagletta to herself, while her sisters pouted, for a poor petty fairy king's daughter to marry the son of the King of all the Fairies was a great rise in the world.

At last, however, dinner was announced by the little black gnome. The Prince sat down to the mushroom table, covered with water-lily leaves, and ate with little rose thorns. First came the soup, then the gold-fish, then the humming-bird; and there was lots of pastry.

"Splendid!" said the Prince, as he tasted the soup. "Fine!" he ejaculated, as he tried the gold-fish; but when it came to the humming-bird, he cried, "Glorious—perfectly glorious! My dear fellow, I congratulate you on your cook. This is the best dinner I ever ate."

"Well, your Highness," said the King, "my domains are not large, and to tell the truth, my servants are few. My little Nobody cooked the dinner."

"Pa needn't have exposed that," whispered the sisters. "He might have kept up the family gentility a little."

"What! a Princess cook a dinner like this!" cried the Prince; "let me see her."

"Oh, she isn't dressed for company, your Highness," said the King.

"No matter, I command it," said the Prince.

And the King led the way to the kitchen. There, among the frying-pans, sat Nobody, and cried, "Oh, pa!" as she saw the King coming with his guest.

"And you have cooked all that dinner?" said the Prince, "and you have made the house so fine?" Then he looked at her again. "Fine feathers make fine birds," he said. "If she had butterfly robes, she'd be lovelier than Princess Rose."

"Oh, my!" said Nobody.

"And any one who can make a palace so fine, must be sprightlier than Princess Sunbeam," said the Prince.

"Good gracious!" said the Princess.

"And it's better to be able to cook like that than to play upon the harp like Princess Eagletta," said the Prince.

"I never thought of such a thing," said Nobody.

"So, if the Princess Nobody will have me, I'll look no further for a wife," said the Prince.

"O dear! what an astonishing thing!" cried the Princess Nobody.

So the end of it all was, that in a day or two all the fairies came to the King's castle, and there was a wedding. And little Nobody, all tears and smiles, rode away in the golden coach beside the son of the King of all the fairies. And the three sisters, standing at the gate, said:

"It's certainly a wonderful thing for poor little Nobody; but if you want to win a man's heart, the surest way is always through his stomach!"

Whereupon they went into the castle again to wait for other princes.

WIT AND HUMOR.

"If you want to make that bird fly, why don't you break its wings?" said the veteran Corporal Podkins to Deacon Loftus. "Are you a fool?" exclaimed the Deacon. "Who ever heard of making anything fly by breaking its wings?" "When I was in the service," responded the Corporal, "we always thought the surest way to make an army fly was to break both its wings."

"It's no use talking about smoking 's shortening life," said Joskins to his wife, who was trying to induce him to give up the practice. "There 's my grandfather now, who 's smoked since he was a boy, and he 's seventy-five years old." "That may be," replied Mrs. J., "but if he hadn't smoked, he might have been ninety."

"What time is it, my dear?" asked a wife of her husband, whom she suspected of being drunk, but who was doing his best to look sober. "Well, my darling, I can't tell, 'cause, you see, there are two hands on my watch, and each points to a different figure, and I don't know which to believe."

A Maryland widow, living on the Eastern Shore, so worked upon the feelings of a young man by threatening to marry him, that he turned over all his property to her and enlisted in the navy as a common sailor, where he thought he'd be safe.

As a stout old lady got out of a crowded omnibus, in front of the Astor House, the other day, she exclaimed, "Well, that's a relief, any how." To which the driver, eying her ample proportions, replied, "So the 'osses thinks, mum."

A little waif that was picked up in Baxter street the other morning was asked if he had a mother, and replied, "I dunno, but I guess not, for when I ran away this morning the old 'uns was quarrellin', and father had the hatchet."

To test the understanding of a little boy who was a witness in a cause, he was asked what they do to persons who swear to a lie. "They make policemen of them," answered the innocent child.

A surrogate of much experience says he is inclined to the opinion that it is an imprudent thing for a man to let his doctor know that he has put him down for a handsome legacy in his will.

A member of the Louisiana Legislature thinks that "the only way to check the growing tendency to self-murder is to make suicide a capital offence, punishable with death."

"Don't you remember the next word in your lesson? It 's the word after cheese. What comes after cheese?" "*Mouse*," triumphantly exclaimed the puzzled pupil.

The ladies may declaim as much as they please against intemperance, but they are themselves exceedingly addicted to a social glass, when it is a looking-glass.

"I want a *Young Man's Companion*," said a spruce customer to a bookseller. "Very well," said the bookseller, picking up a volume, "here 's *My Only Daughter*."

A Slanderous Innuendo.—At a recent printers' festival the following toast was given: "Women—second only to the press in the dissemination of news."

Some young men prefer blue-eyed maidens, and others prefer dark-eyed ones. But of late years the mon-eyed girls have had the call over all others.

A pupil in one of our public schools thinks that hunger and the rod are just about the same thing, as they both make a boy holler.

A "speaking countenance" is usually considered a great thing; but how could the possessor of one ever be silent?

A man struck a match, but the match did not resent it; on the contrary, it lighted the man's pipe for him.

A fop had his nose pulled, and when asked why he didn't resent it, he said he would next tweak.

Because horses are used to reins, it does not follow that they are indifferent to wet weather.

Which are the most melancholy trees? The weeping-willow and the pine-apple.

"The longest drink I ever saw," said an old toper, "was an hour-glass."

A good hotel-keeper is a man that one can always put up with.

The nation which produces most marriages is fasci-nation.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A new safe has been invented which makes things very unpleasant for burglars. The walls are filled with gunpowder in such a manner that the blows of a sledge, or the cutting of a chisel, in the attempt to rob the safe, will ignite the powder, blow off the outer crust, annihilate the burglar, and leave the contents of the safe uninjured.

The wife of a farmer, living near Newburg, took a pail of hot water into the dining-room on Monday of last week, with which to scrub the floor; and hardly had she set it down, when her little three-year-old daughter came running up to her, and falling into the water head foremost, was scalded so terribly that she died in a few hours.

Four boys, the youngest nine and the oldest fourteen years of age, were drowned by breaking through the ice of the Acushnet river, near New Bedford, on Sunday afternoon of last week. They had come over on the ice from Fairhaven, attended a mission Sabbath-school, and were on their return when the catastrophe occurred.

As a little boy named Charles Crane, of Machias, Me., was going home from a Sunday-school concert, when crossing a bridge he was playfully pushed by one of his mates and fell from the end of the bridge to the ice below, a distance of fifteen feet. Striking on his head, his skull was fractured. He died in less than half an hour.

A scientist being imprisoned in a jail in Iowa, discovered that the wall was built of limestone, whereupon he built a fire against it, and after it was sufficiently heated, threw water upon it, which caused the wall to crack open, and he then enlarged the fissure till he was able to crawl through and escape.

A young man in Pennsylvania asked a girl if he might accompany her home from a singing school one evening last week, and on her saying No, he struck her in the face, and repeated the blow several times. He was arrested the next morning, and fined $25 for the outrage.

A woman living in Chatauqua county, N. Y., recently left her two little girls, the eldest six and the youngest two years old, alone in the house while she went to call on a neighbor, and on her return she found the clothes nearly burned off of the eldest. The child died in a couple of hours.

A prosperous citizen of Derby, Vt., was looking after his horses the other day, during a gale of wind, and as he was standing just outside his barn, the door was blown violently against him, and hitting him on the head it fractured his skull, and came near causing his death.

A wealthy German gentleman, while riding in the suburbs of Boston the other day with three ladies, lost the control of his horses, which ran away, and the whole party were thrown out of the carriage, one of the ladies being badly hurt and the gentleman killed outright.

A workman in a Maryland stone quarry was cautioned the other day not to work under an overhanging ledge of rock and earth, but disregarded the warning, and the mass coming down upon him, crushed him instantly to death.

Hay and fodder are said to be so scarce and costly in Northern Vermont and New Hampshire that cattle are suffering for want of provender. Good cows are reported as being sold as low as twelve dollars a head.

A Remarkable Fact.—There are said to be now living in Woodbury, Conn., six survivors of the war of 1812, every one of whom is over eighty years old, and all of whom were members of the same company in the war.

A citizen of Wilton, N. H., aged sixty years, slipped on the ice, a few mornings ago, and falling backward, struck his head heavily. On being raised up, it was found that lockjaw had already set in, and he died soon after.

Some of the experimenters in tea-growing in Tennessee have succeeded in raising a very good article, but the tea cost them about fifteen dollars a pound.

The fishermen of Provincetown, Mass., caught seventy-two thousand pounds of cod and haddock in one day last week, for which they received $1,080.

A citizen of Oregon lately went seven days without food voluntarily, as a penance for his sins, and died on the eighth day, involuntarily.

In Manilla twenty-five thousand women and girls work at cigar making for seven cents a day each.

A tobacco chewer was recently fined six dollars in Taunton, for spitting on a church carpet.

The British Museum has got an anvil which it is claimed belonged to one of the Pharaohs.

WINTER SONG OF THE SOUL.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

We miss the sweet music of fountains;
We miss the glad Song of the Breeze
That breathed from the far away mountains
Upon the green harps of the trees.
Yes, Winter, we miss the sweet glowing
Of Summer's Queen over the land:
Ah, why hast thou fettered the flowing
Of brooks by thy terrible hand?

But short is the time of the chaining;
But short is the chill on the earth;
And then, not a dark vail remaining,
Will new flowers start into birth.
So Winter to us is replying;
Then let for a time tempests roll:
Some season in matter 's for dying,
But no one was made for the *Soul*.

* * *

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,
AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

SAMSON AND DELILAH.

Thus he grew
Tolerant of what he half disdained. And she,
Perceiving that she was but half disdained,
Began to break her arts with graver fits—
Turn red or pale, and often, when they met,
Sigh deeply, or, all-silent, gaze upon him
With such a fixed devotion, that the old man,
Though doubtful, felt the flattery, and at times
Would flatter his own wish, in age, for love,
And half believe her true. TENNYSON.

As soon as the subtle syren was left alone in the drawing-room with the aged clergyman, she began weaving her spells around him as successfully as did the beautiful enchantress Vivien around the sage Merlin.

Throwing her bewildering dark eyes up to his face, she murmured in hurried tones:

"You *will* not betray me to this family? Oh, consider! I am so young and so helpless!"

"And so beautiful," added the old man under his breath, as he gazed with involuntary admiration upon her fair, false face. Then aloud he said, "I have already told you, wretched child, that I would forbear to expose you so long as you should conduct yourself with strict propriety here; but no longer."

"You do not trust me. Ah, you do not see that one false step with its terrible consequence has been such an awful and enduring lesson to me that I *could* not make another. I am safer *now* from the possibility of error than is the most innocent and carefully guarded child. Oh! can you not understand this?" she asked pathetically.

And her argument was a very specious and plausible one, and it made an impression.

"I can well believe that the fearful retribution that followed so fast upon your 'false step,' as you choose to call it, has been and will be an awful warning to you. But some warnings come too late. What *can* be your long future life?" he sadly inquired.

"Alas! *what?*" she echoed, with a profound sigh. "Even under the most propitious circumstances—*what?* If I am permitted to stay here, I shall be buried alive in this country house, without hope of resurrection. Perhaps fifty years I may have to live here. The old lady will die. Emma will marry. Her children will grow up and marry. And in all the changes of future years I shall vegetate here without change, and without hope except in the better world. And yet, dreary as the prospect is, it is the best that I can expect, the best that I can even desire, and much better than I deserve," she added, with a humility that touched the old man's heart.

"I feel sorry for you, child; very, very sorry for your blighted young life. Poor child! you can never be happy again; but listen—*you can be good!*" he said very gently.

And then he suddenly remembered what her bewildering charms had made him for a moment forget—that was, that this unworthy girl had been actually on the point of marriage with an honorable man, when Death stepped in and put an end to the foolish engagement.

So, after a painful pause, he said slowly:

"My child, I have heard that you were about to be married to Charles Cavendish, when his sudden death arrested the nuptials. Is that true?"

"It is true," she answered, in a tone of humility and sorrow.

"But how could you venture to dream of marrying him?"

"Ah, me; I knew I was unworthy of him. But he fell in love with me. I could not help that. Now, could I? *Now, could I?*" she repeated earnestly and pathetically, looking at him.

"N-n-no, perhaps you could not," he admitted.

"And, oh, he courted me so hard! so hard! And I *could not* prevent him."

"Could you not have avoided him? Could you not have left the house?"

"Ah, no: I had no place to go to. I had lost my situation in the school."

"Still you should never have engaged yourself to marry Charles Cavendish, for you must have been aware that if he had known your true story he would never have thought of taking you as his wife?"

"Oh, I know it. And I knew it then. And I was unhappy enough about it. But, oh! what could I do? I could not prevent his loving me, do what I would. I could not go away from the house, because I had no place on earth to go to. And least of all, would I go to him and tell him the terrible story of my life. I would rather have died than have told that! I *should* have died of humiliation in the telling. I *couldn't* tell him. Now, could I? *Could I?*"

"I suppose you had not the courage to do so."

"No, indeed I had not. Yet very often I told him, in a general way, that I was most unworthy of him. But he never would believe that."

"No; I suppose he believed you to be everything that is pure, good and heavenly. What a terrible reproach his exalted opinion of you must have been!"

"Oh, it was! it was!" she answered hypocritically. "It was such a severe reproach that, having in a moment of weakness yielded to his earnest prayer and consented to become his wife, I soon cast about for some excuse for breaking the engagement, for I felt if it were a great wrong to make such an engagement, it would be a still greater wrong to keep it. Don't you agree with me?"

"Yes, most certainly."

"Well, while I was seeking some excuse to break off the marriage, death stepped in and put an end to it. Perhaps then I ought to have left the house, but—I had no money to go with, and, as I said before, no place to go to. And besides, Emma Cavendish was overwhelmed with grief, and could not bear to be left alone; and she begged me to come down here with her. So, driven by my own necessities and drawn by hers, I came down. Do you blame me? *Do* you blame me?" she coaxed pathetically.

"No, I do not blame you for that. But," said the old man gravely and sadly, shaking his head, "*why*, when you got here, did you turn eavesdropper and spy?"

"Oh, me! oh, dear me!" sobbed the syren. "It was the sin of helplessness and cowardice. I dreaded discovery so much. Every circumstance alarmed me. Your arrival and your long mysterious conversation with Madam alarmed me. I thought exposure imminent. I feared to lose this home, which, lonely, dreary, hopeless as it is to *me*, is yet the only refuge I have left on earth. I am penniless and helpless; and but for this kind family I should be homeless and friendless. *Think!* if I had been cast out upon the world, what must have been my fate!"

"What, indeed!" echoed the old man.

"Therefore I dreaded to be cast out. I dreaded discovery. Your visit filled me with uneasiness, that, as the day wore away, reached intense anxiety, and finally arose to insupportable anguish and suspense. Then I went to listen at the door, only to hear whether your conversation concerned me—whether I was still to be left in peace, or to be cast out upon the bitter cold world. Ah, do not blame me too much! Just think how I suffered!" she said pathetically, clasping her hands.

"'Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!'"

murmured the old man to himself. Then aloud he said:

"Poor girl! you were snared in the web of your own contriving. Yet still, when I caught you in that net, why did you deny your identity, and try to make me believe that you were somebody else?"

"Oh, oh! the same sin of helplessness and cowardice; the same fear of discovery and exposure; the same horror of being cast forth from this pure, safe, peaceful home, into the bitter cold, foul, perilous world outside! I feared, if you found out who I was, you would expose me, and I should be cast adrift. And then it all came so suddenly I had no time for reflection. The instinct of self-preservation made me deny my identity before I considered what a falsehood I uttered. Ah, have you no pity for me, in considering the straits to which I was reduced?" she pleaded, clasping her hands before him, and raising her eyes to his face.

"'The way of the transgressor is hard,'" murmured the minister to himself. Then he answered her:

"Yes, I do pity you very much. I pity you for your sins and sufferings. But more than all, I pity you for the moral and spiritual blindness of which you do not even seem to be suspicious, far less conscious."

"I do not understand you," murmured Mary Gray, in a low, frightened tone.

"No, you do not understand me. Well, I will try to explain. You have pleaded your youth as an excuse for your first 'false step,' as you call it. But I tell you that a girl who is old enough *to sin*, is old enough *to know better* than to sin. And if you were not morally and spiritually blind, you would see this. Secondly, you have pleaded your necessities—that is, your interests—as a just cause and excuse for your matrimonial engagement with Governor Cavendish, and for your eavesdropping in this house, and also for your false statements to me. But I tell you, if you had been as truly penitent as you professed to be, you would have felt *no* necessity so pressing as the necessity for true repentance, forgiveness and amendment. And if you had not been morally and spiritually blind, you would have seen *this* also. I sometimes think that it may be my duty to discover you to this family. Yet I will be candid with you. I fear that if you should be turned adrift here, you might, and probably would, fall into deeper sin. Therefore I will not expose you—for the present, and upon conditions. You are safe from me so long as you remain true, honest and faithful to this household. But upon the slightest indication of any sort of duplicity or double dealing, I shall unmask you to Madam Cavendish. And now you had better retire. Good-night."

And with these words the old man walked to a side-table, took a bed-room candle in his hand, and gave it to the widow.

Mary Grey snatched and kissed his hand, courtesied and withdrew.

When she got to her own room, she threw herself into a chair and laughed softly, murmuring:

"The old Pharisee! He is more than half in love with me now. I know it, and I feel it. Yet, to save his own credit *with himself*, he pretends to lecture me, and tries to persuade himself that he means it. But he is half in love with me. Before I have done with him he shall be wholly in love with me. And won't it be fun to have his gray head at my feet, proposing marriage to me? And that is what I mean to bring him to, before a month is over his venerable skeleton."

And with this characteristic resolution, Mary Grey went to bed.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

LAURA LYTTON'S MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR.

There never was a closer friendship between two girls than that which bound Laura Lytton and Emma Cavendish together.

On the night of Laura's arrival, after they had retired from the drawing-room, and Electra had gone to bed and gone to sleep, Laura and Emma sat up together in Emma's room and talked until nearly daylight—talked of everything in the heavens above, the earth below, and the waters under the earth. And then, when at length they parted, Laura asked:

"May I come in here with you to dress tomorrow? And then we can finish our talk."

"Surely, love. Use my room just like your own," answered Emma, with a kiss.

And they separated for a few hours.

But early in the morning, as soon as Emma was out of bed, she heard a tap at her chamber door, and she opened it to see Laura standing there in her white merino dressing-gown, with her dark hair hanging down and a pile of clothing over her arms.

"Come in, dear," said Emma, greeting her with a kiss.

And Laura entered and laid her pile of clothing on a chair, discovering in her hand a rich casket, which she set upon the dressing-table, saying:

"Here, Emma, dear, I have something very curious to show you. You have heard me speak of some unknown friend who is paying the cost of my brother's and my own education?"

"Yes. Haven't you found out yet who he is?" inquired Miss Cavendish.

"No; and I do not even know whether our benefactor is a he or a she. But, any how, he has sent me this," said Laura, unlocking the casket and lifting the lid.

"A set of diamonds and opals fit for a princess!" exclaimed Emma, in admiration, as she gazed upon the deep blue satin tray, on which was arranged a broach, a pair of earrings, a bracelet and a necklace of the most beautiful opals set in diamonds.

"Yes, they are lovely. They must have come from Paris. They are highly artistic," answered Laura. "But look at these others, will you? These are barbaric," she added, lifting the upper tray from the casket, and taking from the recess beneath the heaviest cable gold chain, a heavier finger ring, and a pair of bracelets. "Just take these in your double hands and 'heft' them, as the children say," she concluded, as she put the weight of gold in Emma's open palms, which sank at first under the burden.

"There! what do you think of that?" inquired Laura.

"I think they are barbaric, as you said. Well intended, no doubt, but utterly barbaric. Why, this gold chain might fasten up the strongest bull-dog, and these bracelets serve as fetters for the most desperate felon. Where on earth were they manufactured?" inquired Miss Cavendish.

"In some rude country where there was more gold than good taste, evidently. However, Emma, dear, there is something very touching, very pathetic, to my mind, in these anonymous offerings. Of course they are almost useless to me. I could *never* wear the chain, or the bracelets. They are far too clumsy for any one but an Indian chief; and I can never wear those lovely opals unless by some miracle I grow rich enough to have everything in harmony with them. And yet, Emma, the kindness and—what shall I say?—the humility of this anonymous giver so deeply touches my heart, that I would not part with even a link of this useless chain to buy myself bread, if I were starving," murmured Laura, with the tears filling her eyes, as she replaced the jewels in their casket.

"And you have no suspicion who the donor is?"

"None whatever. These came to me through Mr. Lyle, the agent who receives and pays the money for our education."

"What does your brother say to all this?"

"Oh, it makes him very uneasy at times. He shrinks from receiving this anonymous assistance. It is all Mr. Lyle can do now, by assuring him that in the end he will find it all right, to induce him to continue to receive it. And at all events, he declares that after he graduates he will not take another dollar of this anonymous fund—conscience money or not—but that he will begin to pay back in bank, with interest and compound interest, the debt that he is now incurring."

"I think that resolution is highly to his honor," said Emma Cavendish.

"And he will keep it. I know Alden," answered Laura.

And then the two girls hastened to dress themselves for breakfast. And very well they both looked as they left their room.

Laura wore her crimson merino morning dress, with white linen cuffs and collar, a costume that well became her olive complexion and dark hair and eyes.

Emma wore a black cashmere trimmed with lustreless black silk, and folded book-muslin cuffs and collar. And in this dark dress her radiant blonde beauty shone like a fair star.

They rapped at Electra's door to bring her out.

She made her appearance looking quite dazzling. Electra had a gay taste in dress. She loved bright colors, and many of them. She wore a purple dressing-gown with a brilliant shawl border—a dress for a portly old lady rather than for a slim young girl.

They went down together to the breakfast room, where they found the languishing widow and the old clergyman *tête-à-tête*.

Mrs. Grey greeted them with a sweet smile and honeyed words, and Dr. Jones with a kindly good-morning and hand shake.

And they sat down to breakfast.

This Easter Sunday had dawned clearly and beautifully. The family of Blue Cliffs were all going to attend divine service at Wendover.

So, as soon as breakfast was over, the carriage was ordered, and the young ladies went up stairs to dress for church.

At nine o'clock the whole party set out. Emma Cavendish, Laura Lytton and Electra Coroni went in the old family coach, carefully driven by Jerome. Mrs. Grey went in a buggy driven by the Rev. Dr. Jones.

Who arranged this last drive, this *tête-à-tête*, no one knew except the artful coquette and her venerable victim.

They all reached the church in good time.

The Rector, the Rev. Dr. Goodwin, read the morning service, and the Rev. Dr. Jones preached the sermon.

At the conclusion of the services, when the congregation were leaving, Mr. Craven Kyte came up to pay his respects to the ladies from Blue Cliffs.

Miss Cavendish introduced him to Dr. Jones, explaining that he had been a ward of her father, and was once an inmate of Blue Cliff Hall.

Dr. Jones received the young man with courtesy, and in his turn introduced him to Miss Coroni.

Then Emma Cavendish invited him to go home with them to dinner, kindly reminding him of the old custom of spending his holidays in his guardian's house.

With a smile and a bow, and with a warm expression of thanks, the young man accepted the offered hospitality.

And when the party entered their carriages to return to Blue Cliffs, Craven Kyte, mounted on a fine horse, attended them.

But mind, he did not ride beside the carriage that contained the three young ladies, but beside the gig occupied by Mary Grey and Dr. Jones.

And the very first inquiry he made of Emma, on reaching the house, was:

"Is the Rev. Dr. Jones a married man?"

"Why, what a question!" exclaimed Emma, laughing. "No: he is not a married man. He is a widower. Why did you ask?"

"I don't know. But I *thought* he was a widower. He seems very much taken with Mrs. Grey," sighed the young man.

"Oh, is *that* it?" laughed Emma, as she ran away to take off her bonnet and mantle.

And that Easter Sunday Mary Grey found herself again in a dilemma between her two proposed victims, the grey-haired clergyman and the raven-locked youth.

But she managed them both with so much adroitness, that at the close of the day, when Craven Kyte was riding slowly back to Wendover, he was saying to himself:

"She *is* fond of me, after all; the beauty! the darling! the angel! O that such a perfect creature should be fond of me! I am at this moment the very happiest man on earth."

And later the same night, when the Rev. Dr. Jones laid his woolen night-capped head upon his pillow, instead of going to sleep, as an old gentleman should have done, he lay awake and communed with himself as follows:

"Poor child! poor child! A mere baby. And she *is* penitent; sincerely penitent. Oh, I can see that. And to think that she is not nearly so much in fault as we believed her to be! She tells me that she really was married to that man; married when she was a child only fourteen years of age.

"So her gravest error was in running away to be married? And that was the fault of the man who stole her, rather than of herself.

"And she is as repentant for that fault as if it was some great crime?

"And oh, how she has suffered! What she has gone through, for one so young!

"And she has such a tender, affectionate, clinging nature! Ah, what will become of her? poor child, poor child!

"She ought to have some one to take care of her. She ought, indeed, to be married, for no one but a tender husband could take care of such a pretty, delicate, helpless creature. She ought to marry some one much older than herself.

"Not a green, beardless boy like that young puppy—Heaven forgive me!—I mean that young man Kyte. He couldn't appreciate her, couldn't be a guide or a guard to her. And she needs guiding and guarding too. For see how easily she falls into error.

"She ought to marry some good, wise, elderly man, who could be her guide, philosopher and friend, as well as husband."

And so murmuring to himself, he fell asleep to dream that he himself was the model guide, philosopher and friend required by the young widow.

CHAPTER LXXV.

A GROWL FROM UNCLE JACKY.

The next day, Easter Monday, brought a messenger from Lytton Lodge, a messenger who was no other than Mithridates, commonly called "Taters," once a servant of Frederick Fanning, the landlord of White Perch Point, but now a hired hand of John Lytton's.

Mithridates, or Taters, rode an infirm looking old draft horse, with a dilapidated saddle and bridle, and wore a hat and coat exceedingly shabby for a gentleman's servant.

He also led a second horse, furnished with a side-saddle.

He dismounted at the carriage steps, tied his horses to a tree, and boldly went up to the front door and knocked.

Jerome opened it, and administered a sharp rebuke to the messenger for presuming to knock at the visitor's door instead of at the servants'.

"If I'd a come to the servants', I'd rapped at the servants' door; but as I have comed to the white folks', I rap at der door. Here! I've fotch a letter from Marse Jacky Lytton to his niece, Miss Lorrer," said Taters pompously.

"Give it to me then, and I'll take it in to her," said Jerome.

"Set you up with it! I must 'liver of this here letter with my own hands inter her own hands," said Taters stoutly.

"Well, come along, for a fool! You're a purty looking objick to denounce into the parlor! an't you now?" said Jerome, leading the way.

At that moment, unseen by Jerome, but distinctly seen by Taters, a face appeared at the head of the stairs for an instant; but meeting the eye of Taters, turned white as death and vanished.

Taters uttered a terrible cry, and sank, ashen pale and quaking with horror, at the foot of the steps.

"Why, what in the name of the Old Boy is the matter with you, man? Have you trod on a nail or piece of glass, or anything that has gone through your foot? or what is it?" demanded Jerome, in astonishment.

"Oh, no, no, no, it's worse'n that! It's worse'n that! It's no end worse'n that! Oh, Lor! Oh, Lor! Oh, Lor!" cried Taters, holding his knees and sawing backward and forward in an agony of horror.

"Ef you don't stop that howlin' and tell me what's the matter of you, I'm blessed ef I don't get a bucket of ice water and heave it all over you to fetch you to your senses!" exclaimed the exasperated Jerome.

"Oh, Lor! don't! Oh! please don't! I shill die quick enough now without that!" cried Taters, writhing horribly.

"WHAT'S THE MATTER, YOU BORN IDDIWUT?" roared Jerome, in a fury.

"Oh! I've seen a sperrit! I've seen a sperrit! I've seen the sperrit of my young mistess! And it's a token of my death!" wailed the negro boy in agony.

"What's that you say? A sperrit? A sperrit in this yer 'spectable, 'sponsible house? Lookee here, nigger; mind what you say now, or it'll be the wus for you! A sperrit in this yer ginteel family as never had a crime or a ghost inter it! The Cavendishers nebber 'mits no crimes when der living, nor likewise don't walk about ondecent arter der dead. And der an't no sperrits here," said Jerome, with ire.

"Oh, I wish it wasn't! I wish it wasn't! But it was a sperrit. And it's a token of my death! It's a token of my death!" howled Taters.

And now at last the noise brought the three young ladies out of the drawing-room.

"What is the matter here, Jerome?" inquired Miss Cavendish. "Has any one got hurt? Who is that man?"

"Ef you please, Miss Emma, no one an't got hurt, though you might a thought, from the squalling, that there was a dozen pigs a-killin.' And that man, Miss, is a born iddiwut, so he is—begging your pardon, Miss—and says he's seed a sperrit in this yer barristocraterick house, where there never was a sperrit yet," explained Jerome, with a grieved and indignant look.

"But who *is* the man? What is he doing here? And what does he want?" inquired the young lady.

"The man is a born iddiwut, Miss Emma, as I telled you before; that's who the man is. And he's a making of a 'fernal fool of hisself; That's what he's doing here. And he deserves a good hiding; and that's what he wants!" said Jerome irately.

Miss Cavendish passed by the privileged old family servant, and went up to the man himself, and inquired:

"Who are you, boy? What brings you here? And what ails you?"

"Oh, Miss! I'm Taters, I am. And I come to fetch a letter from Marse Jacky Lytton to Miss Lorrer. And I seen a sperrit at the top o' them stair steps. And that's what's the matter of me," cried the boy.

"A spirit! Jerome, do you think he's been drinking?" inquired the young lady, in a low, frightened voice.

For all answer, Jerome, without the least hesitation, seized Taters by the head, pulled open his jaws, and stuck his own nose into the cavity and took an audible snuff. Then releasing the head, he answered:

"No, Miss, he an't been drinking nuffin. His breff's as sweet as a milch cow's. I reckon he must be subjick to epperliptic fits, Miss, by the way he fell down here all of a suddint, crying out as he'd seen a sperrit."

"You said you had a letter, boy. Where is it?" inquired Emma.

"Here, Miss! Here it is! I'll give it to you, though I wouldn't give it to him there!" answered Taters, with a contemptuous glance toward Jerome.

Emma took the letter, which was inclosed in a wonderfully dingy yellow envelope, and she read the superscription, and then called to Laura, saying:

"Come here, my dear. Here is a letter from Lytton Lodge for you."

Laura Lytton, who, with Electra, had been standing just within the drawing-room door, near enough to observe the group, but not to hear the whole of their conversation, now came when she was called, and received her letter.

"It is from dear Uncle Jacky," she said, with an affectionate smile, as she recognized the handwriting.

And then she asked the messenger a multitude of questions, which he was too much agitated to answer coherently, until at length Miss Cavendish said:

"Jerome, take the poor fellow into the kitchen and give him something to eat and drink. There is nothing like beef and beer to exorcise evil spirits. And when he is rested and refreshed, we will see him again."

And Jerome took Taters rather roughly by the shoulder and pulled him upon his feet, and carried him along the hall through the back door toward the kitchen.

"Will you excuse me now, dear Emma, while I read my uncle's letter?" inquired Laura, as she retreated to the drawing-room.

"Certainly," smiled Miss Cavendish, following her guests.

Laura went into the recess of a bay-window and opened the dingy yellow envelope, and read as follows:

"LYTTON LODGE, April —, 18—.

"MY DEAR NIECE: I think my nephew, Alden, has a more correcter ideer of what is jue to kin and kith than what you have shown.

"Alden is spending his Easter holidays along of me and his relations.

"But you haven't been nigh the house since you left it to go to school. You do seem to be so wrapped up in the Cavendishers as not to think anything of your own folks.

"Now I can tell you what it is. The Lyttonses are a great deal older and better family than all the Cavendishers that ever lived. I don't care if they was Governors of the State.

"I have heard my grandfather, who was a scholar, say that the Lyttonses was landed gentry in the old country long before the Cavendishers followed of their lord and marster William the Conkerer across the channil. And so I don't approve of your sliting of the Lyttonses for them there Cavendishers. Spesherly as you're a Lytton yourself. And if we don't respect ourselves and each other, no one an't a going to respect us.

"And talking of that, what do you think Hezekiah Greenfield, the landlord of the Reindeer, went and done to me last week?

"Why, he came over and asked me, could I supply his tavern with fruits and vegetables during the summer season at the market price, saying—quite as if he was a making of me a kind proposal, instead of offering of me a black insult—that he'd rather deal with me, and I should have his money, than any one else, if so be I was willing to do business.

"Now what do you think I answered of him?

"Why, I set the bull-dog on him! I did that! And it was good for him as he scrambled up on his horse and made off double quick, or he'd been torn to pieces before you could say Jack Robinson.

"That'll learn the tavern-keeper to insult a gentleman next time, by offering to buy his garden stuff.

"But what I'm a writing to you for, my dear, now, is this. I think you ought to come to see us, any how. You must come, if it's only for two or three days, to see your old grandmother, and all your relations, and to meet Alden, who is here, as I said. I have sent Taters on horseback with a led horse and a side-saddle for you. Come back along of him to-morrow morning. And give my honorable compliments to the old Madam and Miss Cavendish. Because, mind you, I'm not a saying as the Cavendishers an't a good, respectabil family; only I do say as they are not so good as the Lyttonses, and they never was, and never will be; and they know it themselves too. Well, your dear grandma, and your dear aunties and cousins all sends their love to you, with many good wishes. So no more at present from your affeckshunit uncle,

"JOHN LYTTON."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* * *

—There are some persons who possess an inexpressible charm in their manners, a something which attracts our love instantaneously; without wealth, position, or talents, still a dignity hovers round them and ennobles every action.

THE HAUNTED CABIN.

BY AN OLD CONTRIBUTOR.

Katie Franklin and Alice Knox looked at one another, with eyes that were half pleased, half fearful, as they stood on the narrow ledge, or table-land, that skirted a glen, one carrying the sketching stools, the other weighted with portfolios and color cases.

Miss Franklin was a bright-cheeked, hazel-eyed brunette, her jetty hair cut short, and curling in glossy rings over a broad low brow. Alice Knox, on the contrary, was fair and tall, with dreamy blue eyes, a complexion of rose and lily.

"I told you so, Katie," sighed Alice, her pretty crimson lip quivering like that of a grieved four-year-old.

"And there's no sort of use in bemoaning ourselves," briskly broke in Katie. "Just hear the drops come tinkling down. Let's get under a tree."

"And be sure to get struck by lightning," said Alice dolefully.

"Well, a big rock then."

"There's no rock on all the mountain big enough to cover us. O dear, how dark it is getting! How I wish we were home."

"Don't be a goose, Alice," said Katie. "The sketching umbrella will cover us until we can find some shelter. It was only last week you were wanting to 'camp out,' like Dick Halyard and Austin Steele. A nice camper-out you would make, if you can't rough it any better than this!"

And her merry musical laugh woke a responsive smile in Alice's troubled face.

"Here's one thing we can do, at least," she said. "That old deserted cabin we sketched this afternoon can't be more than a quarter of a mile up. I am sure there is roof enough left under those picturesque trails of woodbine to keep off the rain. And Mrs. Joyce will be certain to send Nicodemus with our umbrellas and water-proofs as soon as she misses us."

"No she won't either," sighed Alice. "You know we told her we might go across to Nelly Latimer's, and stay all night."

"So we did," admitted Katie, looking rather blank. "Well, there'll be a moon to-night any way, and it will be jolly fun going down the mountain by moonlight, when the shower is over."

"But I'm afraid of the bears and whip-poor-wills and things," owned the city damsel.

"Fiddlesticks!" cried Katy, in lofty contempt. "I could buy up all the bears on this mountain with a crooked sixpence."

"And it's going to settle down into an all-night's rain, I know it is," said Alice, doing her best to keep up with the quick-tripping footsteps of her companion.

"Only think what a jolly adventure it will be to put in our journals to-morrow!" went on Katie.

And Katie dragged her rather unwilling companion across the threshold of a ruinous looking little cottage, or rather shanty, long since abandoned to decay. As the two girls entered, something whizzed past them with a rustling, eldritch sound.

"Oh, Katie, what is that?" exclaimed Alice, clinging tightly to her bolder companion.

"Only an owl or a bat. Alice, what a coward you are!"

"Well, I can't help it. What was it Mrs. Joyce's mother told us about this cabin?—that a girl was murdered here by the Indians, and that her spirit haunted the mountain side?"

"Oh, there's always a story about every old deserted cabin in the country," said Katie, shaking the rain-drops off her garments. "I believe we should be better sheltered from the rain up stairs," she added, "for half the boards are gone here."

"You are not going up that ladder into the garret?"

"Of course I am."

"But, Katie, stop! That's where the Indians hid themselves, and watched their opportunity."

Kate burst out laughing. "You silly girl—your eyes are shining in the dusk just exactly as if you expected to see them now, war-paint, scalp-locks and all. Come up here—it's as cozy as possible, and there is a corner where the thatch seems in excellent preservation yet."

Alice Knox followed slowly, and rather reluctantly.

"Katie, do you think we shall have to stay here all night? What's that?"

"Just the wind banging one of the loose boards against the side of the house."

"It sounded just like a footstep below. And— Katie, I am *sure* some one groaned there!" exclaimed Alice, clutching at her friend's arm.

"Nothing on earth but the branches of the trees scraping against the roof," said Katie cheerily.

"And there's an owl hooting! O dear, what a dismal sound it is! I wish there were no such things as owls. Katie—oh, Katie! I *knew* it! I was sure of it! Only look down there!"

She was bending in an attitude of the extremest terror over a crevice in the rough boards that constituted the floor. Katie Franklin obeyed her beckoning hand, and knelt beside her to look down. A cold chill crept involuntarily through her veins as she saw something white glimmering through the fast gathering darkness below—a something that moved, and uttered a low sound, like heavy, spasmodic breathing.

"The murdered girl!" whispered Alice, grasping her friend's wrist. "Oh, Katie, that is the way they said she glided to and fro, moaning softly all the night long! Katie! Katie! I shall faint!"

Katie Franklin dragged the poor girl to the little casement under the eaves, where the dash of the rain, and the cooling touch of the wind, speedily revived her, but she sobbed hysterically still.

"Hush, darling," soothed Katie, "she—it—has gone now."

"No—don't you hear the moaning? Katie, it's a judgment upon us because we said we didn't believe in ghosts. Oh, I wish some one would come! I wish it was morning!"

Katie herself, brave though she was, felt her heart sink at the idea, as she clasped Alice in her arms; but there was no other alternative than to wait. And thus they passed the night, in mortal terror, under the roof of the log cabin upon the lonely mountain side.

They had both of them declared that "they could not sleep a wink," but exhausted nature claimed her ransom, and toward morning both sank into a heavy sleep, from which they were only wakened by the ruddy beams of the morning sun shining upon their faces.

The night was passed, and with it had disappeared the shadowy glimmer and the ceaseless moaning of the ghost.

Mrs. Joyce, the good-natured farmeress—if such a word there be—with whom they boarded, was astounded to see her two city guests coming homeward, drenched, pallid and hollow-eyed, before she had broken her eggs into the frying-pan for breakfast.

"Well, I never!" cried Mrs. Joyce. "So you was belated up on the mountain, and in that tumble-down old cabin too! But it's queer you didn't hear nor see nothin' of our Nicodemus."

"What do you mean?" questioned Katie, somewhat surprised.

"Why, that ar' big white calf got out of its pen yesterday arternoon, and strayed out on the mountain, and Nicodemus he was huntin' for it in all that rain. And where d'ye suppose he found it, of all places in the world, long arter midnight? Why, in that old cabin! The creetur'd had sense enough to get out of the rain, and there it was, cryin' like a human. And you was up chamber the hull while."

"Well, we—we *did* think we heard something," said Katie, stealing a somewhat confused glance at Alice.

"But the rain made such a noise, and it was so dark," added Alice hurriedly. "Dear me, Mrs. Joyce, how good that coffee does smell! And I'm *so* hungry!"

And the young ladies, writing their diaries that morning, entirely omitted all mention of the ghost they had seen!

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1872.

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FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1872.

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Strange Crimes—Increase of Personal Assaults.

It seems as if there had been an unusual number of crimes of an extraordinary character lately.

A young married woman in Brooklyn deliberately shot down her employer, for whom she had worked several years.

A man in Grand street put a pistol ball through the head of his favorite son!

In New Jersey a case has been on trial in which two daughters and the sons-in-law of a rich old man were charged with conspiring to cause his death by burning him up in his own house. A hired man confessed that he was employed by one of the daughters to set the house on fire.

In England, a clergyman has been convicted of murdering his wife, toward whom his previous treatment had been remarkably kind. Physicians testified that he was insane, but the jury convicted him.

There has been a great increase of personal assaults, for the purpose of robbery. In Brooklyn, a well-known Professor of Music was knocked in the head with a slung-shot, and killed; and in the course of half a week, in one of the most respectable neighborhoods in that city, four persons were set upon, in the evening, by robbers. One of them was shot through the arm, and another was badly bruised with a slung-shot.

We apprehend that one cause of the increase of highway robberies is the increased protection of property in dwellings. Formerly it was easy to break into houses and obtain more or less property. Hence burglaries were very common. Now houses are better secured and guarded. Ingress to them is rendered more difficult, and egress and escape are less certain than formerly, because more people are provided with arms in their own rooms, and disposed to use them on depredators.

The cold weather pinches the habitual criminals. Starvation stares them in the face. They find it impossible to steal enough, with impunity, to live upon, and they resort to robbery.

Formerly highway robbery was punished with death. It ought still to be punished with imprisonment for life.

In some way or other we should obtain a more efficient police. There is no reason why, with the amount of money which the Police Department costs, our public streets should not be rendered more safe.

A few mornings since, a man was attacked on the corner of Broadway and Twentieth street, and although the robbers were seen and driven away, yet they managed to make good their escape, leaving only their hats behind them.

Every man feels the danger of being out in the evening, and it has become so considerable as to be a source of anxiety to every family.

◆

"Can't be Helped."

This is a phrase often enough on the lips of feeble folk. As they miss chances, and spoil undertakings, they console themselves with this pitiable formula. It serves their purpose. It suggests a sort of fate outside themselves, inevitable and irresistible, of which they are the victims. It clears them of responsibility, or it reconciles to blunders. A man is on the wrong track when he often says, "It can't be helped." True, "there is no remedy for spilled milk," when it has been spilled; but there are a good many precautions against the spilling. A strong man takes the precautions; a weak man spills the milk, and then, with a look and tone of commiseration, partly of himself, partly of the wreck, he says, "It can't be helped."

◆

Excuse for Having a Poor Horse.

A *Killarney* correspondent of the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian*, speaking of the condition of Irish tenants under British legislation, says:

> "Their laws were all so shaped as to keep their dependents down. For instance, no tenant dare have a horse worth more than five pounds. If by care and attention to his animal, his worth should at any time pass the legal limit, the horse became the property of his landlord. Hence the tenant, following his interest, usually kept poor, worthless stock."

A poor horse is a poor thing; but it may be, sometimes, that a poor horse of your own may be of more service to you than a good one belonging to somebody else.

A Horse Drawing the Nations Upward.

One of our religious contemporaries recently inquired whether any man had ever been drawn upward by a horse—meaning, we suppose, to intimate that the Almighty, in creating the horse, and making the race so numerous, had only created so many agents of the Evil One, to draw men steadily downward.

There is a certain horse in this city. This horse carries his owner to ride every morning. This ride is seldom—scarcely ever—omitted. Sunshine or storm, clear skies or rain, hail, sleet or snow: whatever the weather may be, through summer's heat or winter's cold, so that there is not excessively slippery footing, whenever the owner is in the city, the ride takes place. On these short winter days, before the sun appears above the horizon, the horse and his rider may be seen afar out on the road through the Central Park.

What of it? A good deal of it.

The rider is an old man, if we reckon his age by years; yet he is hale, healthy, vigorous, full of animation, full of energy, full of hope and confidence as a youth.

And what is the secret of all this?

The horseback ride in the morning.

This early ride, and its health-giving influence, enable the rider to perform a great and unusual amount of mental labor. He is a lawyer enjoying, we suppose, the largest, or at least the most lucrative practice ever possessed by any member of the legal profession in the United States. As author of the Code of Procedure of this State, which has been extensively adopted elsewhere, he is well known throughout the civilized world.

But how about this horse drawing the nations upward?

To a late hour every night, for years past, the distinguished gentleman of whom we speak has been engaged upon an *International Code*, which will soon be completed, and one great and principal object of which is to abolish, or at least to diminish wars, and make the great principles of peace, which are an essential part of Christianity, a practical and realized truth, and not a mere theory, over the whole earth.

But for the morning rides this great work would probably never have been written.

The general adoption of this *International Code* will probably be the work of years yet to come, but its benign influence will begin to be felt as soon as it is published.

The name of the author is DAVID DUDLEY FIELD. Is not the horse deserving of a name also? Has not he done something to draw, not a man, only, but the nations, upward? When Mr. FIELD's statue comes to be erected, we think it should be an equestrian one, and on this horse.

◆

Hetner May Recover.

"HETNER may recover," it is said. HETNER is the name of the father who shot his own son, in Grand street, in this city, a few days ago. He was a very affectionate father. He loved his son dearly. Indeed, for some reason, the boy seemed to be his favorite among all his children. HETNER placed a pistol to the boy's head and blew out his brains. His own brain had been poisoned by alcohol, and that was the way he came to do it. He had put the cup to his lips, and it had made a madman of him.

And now it is said that HETNER may recover. No, he will not recover. Miserable man, he can never recover!

We do not mean that he may not get over his present attack of delirium tremens. We do not mean that he may not regain his health, and eat and drink, and walk about.

But he will never recover. He will never recover his happiness. It has gone forever—at least for this life. He will never recover his poor murdered boy. Oh, fatal moment, when his own hands wrought his life-long misery! He will see ever before his mind's eye the face of that son. The youthful voice, that has been hushed by premature death, will never be hushed to the ear of his father's memory. He cannot recall him.

What a warning! Here is a practical temperance sermon, more impressive than the most eloquent that ever fell from mortal lips.

◆

A Warning to American Girls.

An American girl married a Swiss gentleman, in this city, about a year ago, and returned with him to his native land a few months afterward. It is now reported that, within a few weeks past, the Supreme Court of the Canton of Soleure set aside the marriage on the ground that it had been contracted in America, without the consent of the commune to which the husband belonged having been previously obtained. This, of course, leaves the wife without redress, so long as her husband continues to reside in his native place. In this State the marriage would be adjudged valid; but if the husband keeps himself and his property out of the jurisdiction of our courts, they cannot help the wronged wife.

It has repeatedly happened that American girls, who have married natives of Continental Europe and gone home with them, have found themselves dishusbanded because some technical formality required by the local laws of the husband's birthplace had not been complied with. It therefore behooves young ladies in this country to be careful to have every formality strictly attended to when they marry admirers from any of the continental countries of Europe.

◆

With All the Heart.

The *Methodist Recorder*, in the following extract, gives hearty expression to a sentiment which we have always entertained:

> "That was a striking thing said of one of the kings belonging to the Hebrew royalty, when the work and results of his successful reign were being summed up: 'He did it with all his heart, and prospered.'
>
> "This doing things with a hearty enthusiasm is often what makes the doer a marked person and his deeds effective. It is so everywhere. The most ordinary service is dignified when it is performed in that spirit. Every employer wants those who work for him to put heart into the toil. He soon picks out those whose souls are in their service, and gives them evidences of his appreciation. They do not need constant watching. He can trust them in his absence. The places of honor and profit naturally fall to them. They are the rising members of the toiling brotherhood. They grow; they succeed; they are honored; they are in demand. They rebuke indifference and inspire fidelity in others by their example. They prosper, for they work in harmony with the law which God has established and maintains in the world."

◆

[From the Michigan State Register.]

The New York Ledger.

The *Ledger* was never more attractive and readable than it is at present, which is saying considerable for a journal that has enjoyed from its commencement a degree of prosperity and popularity unparalleled in the history of periodical literature. Never was a more notable array of talent drawn around an editorial staff, itself the best that money could procure; all uniting in making a great paper adapted to the wants of *all* readers, and herein lies the secret of its world-wide popularity. Not an objectionable word or line has appeared in its columns since we have been a constant reader—nine years!—which is more than we can truly say of many of the professedly religious journals. Every number is brimful of able editorials, choice poems, deeply interesting continued stories, sketches, paragraphs, etc., making it the universal favorite of all intelligent, thoughtful readers.

◆

—*Dexter* is the only horse in the world that ever trotted a mile in public in two minutes and sixteen seconds—(2:16.)

SELF-DISTRUST.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER—*Dear Sir:* I am a young man, and want to do the best I can, and therefore come to you to answer, through the *New York Ledger*, the following: What can I do to cure my want of confidence in myself? Even if I do a thing, and see that it is perfectly reasonable and sanctioned by a great many people, I feel that it may not be right, and people will laugh at me.

I have enterprise; I go ahead and do things. They have made me Sunday-school Superintendent, and class leader in our church. But whatever I do there, also socially and in my business, I feel this unpleasant want of confidence.

This want of confidence goes thus far: If I am to do a thing, I do the best I can, and even if, to all appearances, it is perfectly done, then still I feel unhappy over it, fearing that it might be wrong. I don't make my feelings known to other people, but nevertheless I feel it.

I hope that you will tell me what to do to get rid of this blight to my happiness. —— ——.

The writer of this letter would be described by a phrenologist as one having too much "approbativeness" and too little "self-esteem."

It is quite possible that this disproportion may more or less occasion disturbance all one's life. Yet a resolute training may do much to modify a constitutional peculiarity; it can never certainly overcome it.

It may be that there is simply a super-sensitive and even morbid state of feeling which will gradually wear out, or, at some climacteric period, pass away. We have known persons subject through all their youth to great depression of spirits, and to suffering from feelings not unlike those of our questioner, who, after some years in active life, found the tendency wearing away, and at length were quite relieved from its painful action. But, while something may be hoped from *time*, much may be done by one's own will.

A constant resistance to a painful feeling, a resolute putting it down, a turning from it to other views, however great the effort required, will greatly modify it, and may in the end control it. A thought continuously dwelt upon, a painful feeling suffered to come in and out of the heart at its own will, without resistance, gain ascendency and increased power. But by being checked and resisted, they at length lose force, and become manageable.

Do not think much about yourself. And when you *do* think, put the brightest face upon it. Consider that morbid *self-distrust* as an intruder that has no business in your brain. Treat it as you would insects or vermin that infested your dwelling. Hunt it, crush it, give it no quarter.

But while thus seeking relief from a painful and depressing action of a faculty, it would be a pity to overcome the feeling in its milder form, so as to have no diffidence of your own power whatever. It may be of some consolation to you to know that you are one of a thousand. An American suffering from self-distrust! Where can you find one who has not only the utmost confidence in himself, but who can by no method be put into a humble frame of mind? I do not know but it will be worth while for you to suffer on for the public good. Modesty and diffidence of one's powers are not qualities so common that one should hide their light under a bushel. It may be that you are raised up to leaven the lump around you with a singular grace to which the typical "Young America" is a stranger.

However, that must be left to your own moral convictions. Meanwhile, besides all that I have advised above, I would commend you to seek a skilful physician, and see whether your *liver* is not at fault. If a *sound liver* is not a virtue, it is the indispensable condition of a great many. A morbid liver fills the mind with innumerable falsities. Maintain regular habits. Keep a sound liver. Think as little of yourself as possible. Resist depression of spirits. Wait for years to help you, and accept my good wishes.

◆

MISTAKES IN PUBLIC MEETINGS.

Not long since I listened to some addresses in behalf of a new philanthropy, having for its object the relief of needy women. That it was a very praiseworthy object, no listener of any reflection could doubt. But the same mistake was made here, that I have observed in almost all meetings of this kind—a depreciation of other attempts to benefit women, as seemingly necessary to the success of the one under present consideration. A remark like this, for instance: "The ladies having this philanthropy in charge do not go about prating of woman's rights or woman's wrongs, but," etc.

Now the world is wide, and I couldn't see why there was not room in it for both these classes of workers for the emancipation of woman, or where was the necessity of stepping one side to give the earnest, hearty, sincere advocates of women's rights a thrust. Nor because among the latter are to be found objectionable persons, why the intelligent and refined, discreet and cultivated among them should be included in the same condemnation. Methinks if this rule were applied to some enterprises started by men, there would be a great collapsing of their Associations. No! gentlemen speakers; that's not the way, in my humble opinion, to address such meetings.

There is a lovely verse in the Bible about "that charity which hopeth all things, and is kind." There are many fields, and many workers in each, for the object for which the meeting above alluded to was called. Some do more good service in one, and some in another. Some have the golden, persuasive gift of speech; others work more effectively with their hands. Both are needed. Both, if sincere of purpose and pure of life, should equally be welcomed as helpers to this great cause.

There *are* great "wrongs" to be righted for women. And if the time spent in calling names were spent in redressing them by each, according to their peculiar gift and light, neither underrating the other, there would be much more accomplished.

I find quite as much *meandering* off, to unimportant matters among male as among female speakers. And when I hear a man near me, while waiting for a female speaker to begin, ask, "What can *she* have to tell us that we don't already know?" or remark, "It is to be hoped she will stick to the point under discussion," I may be pardoned for indulging in a quiet smile at his profundity.

FANNY FERN.

◆

Etiquette Among African Chiefs.

A correspondent of the *New York Evangelist*, writing from Sierra Leone, gives an account of an interview with some chiefs from the interior of Africa. He met them at breakfast, and was surprised at the ease and courtesy of their bearing. He says:

> "The behavior of the chiefs at the table was unexceptionable. No pupil of Lord Chesterfield's could have demeaned himself more *comme il faut*. The Governor, on whose left I sat, remarked to me that there could not be found in any part of Europe the same number of men of no greater educational advantages who would exhibit anything like the good breeding and gentlemanly behavior of these chiefs.
>
> "But these people are trained to the rules of etiquette, which in their country is carried further even than in Beacon street, Boston, or in Fifth Avenue, New York. Every man who enters a room must make formal salutations and utter formal phrases exactly adapted to the relative social station of himself and his host, and the strictest observances regulate his sitting down, his departure, and all his intercourse. Before they enter a house they must send to announce themselves.
>
> "In these observances they are bred up from infancy; they are part of their religion, and, indeed, they know not what else to do. They are no more encumbered by these proceedings than they are by their flowing robes."

THE LADY ARABELLA STUART.

SAD FATE OF AN HEIRESS TO THE ENGLISH CROWN.

The Lady Arabella Stuart, like her relentless persecutor James the First, was descended in the direct line from Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry the Seventh and his queen, heiress of the house of York. Of this unhappy lady it may truly be said, that her royal birth was a curse to her. Queen Elizabeth, whenever she wished to annoy James, whom she secretly hated and despised, used to allude to the Princess as her successor; and she might have had some chance of the splendid inheritance, had not Cecil, on the death of the royal virago, secured her person till James had been quietly proclaimed and taken possession of the throne.

From the date of his accession, the crafty monarch appears to have made up his mind that the object of his fears should never marry. With this exception, he treated her at first with some show of liberality. He settled a handsome pension upon her, and during the infancy of his daughter Elizabeth, caused her to be recognized as the first lady of the court. His assigning to her the royal lady apartments in the palace, may be attributed to the desire of keeping her under his own eye.

A personage of such importance, so peculiarly situated, was certain to be made a subject of political intrigue; not that there exists the slightest reason to believe that she ever joined in any of the numerous plots with which her name was associated, or even had cognizance of them. James himself suspected her. Within a year after his accession to the crown, the King of Poland sent an ambassador to England to demand her hand in marriage. It was refused, as also a similar application of Maurice Duke of Guilders.

Whatever her real feelings might have been on these occasions, Arabella conducted herself with the greatest prudence, affected to feel averse to marriage, and occupied herself with literature, including theology, which the taste of the pedant monarch had rendered fashionable at court.

She had many enemies, no doubt, who were eager for her destruction. Raleigh and Lord Cobham were accused, on their trial, of having intended to depose James and place her upon the throne. Cobham had written a letter to that effect, which the royal maiden forwarded, the instant she received it, to the king.

Her name was mixed up most unjustly with the celebrated gunpowder plot. In fact there does not exist the slightest proof that Arabella Stuart ever connected herself with any of the numerous intrigues, political or otherwise, of the day.

The Queen of James remained her attached friend, and on more than one occasion softened by her entreaties the rigors with which her suspicious husband treated his unfortunate cousin. It must have been a very sad fate—a young and, judging from her portraits, a beautiful princess debarred the dearest privileges of her womanhood, those of loving and being beloved, condemned to cold celibacy by a crafty, jealous tyrant, one of the meanest and most despicable of men, who never exercised the least restraint where his own vile passions were concerned. The greater the admiration which the charms of the Lady Arabella excited at court, the greater became the fears of her persecutor, who placed her under the surveillance of her own aunt, Elizabeth Cavendish, Countess of Shrewsbury, who treated her with great harshness, probably because the King, with his usual penuriousness, paid the pension of his victim so irregularly.

Love is the most persevering passion of humanity, because it is the most natural. The return of William Seymour, the son of Lord Beauchamp, whom Arabella Stuart had known in childhood, to England, and consequently to court, caused a renewal of their intimacy, which soon ripened into a more tender feeling. The spies placed near the person of the royal lady very soon conveyed the unwelcome intelligence to the ear of James, who became alarmed. Seymour was descended from Henry the Seventh in as direct a line as Arabella, and the union of two such interests was not without a certain danger, when it is considered how dissatisfied the nation had become with their pedantic sovereign. The offenders were immediately summoned before the Privy Council, where they were sternly forbidden to marry without the consent of the King.

As a matter of course, they promised to obey the harsh injunction. What else could they do, seeing that both were in the hands of their enemies? This promise appears to have been given merely to lull the suspicions of their tyrant. In July, 1610, it was discovered that they were secretly married. Seymour was at once committed to the Tower, and his bride to the keeping of Sir Thomas Parry, at Lambeth.

This act of cruelty and gross injustice passed unquestioned both in Parliament and the courts of law, a proof, if any were requisite, of the abuse of the royal prerogative, and the absence of public spirit in England at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and it is scarcely to be wondered at, that when the nation awoke to a sense of its rights in the succeeding reign, that the reaction proved so terrible.

But although no demonstration in favor of the persecuted pair took place either in the Parliament or law courts, great sympathy was generally felt for them. Seymour found means to bribe his keeper so effectually that he permitted him to leave the tower occasionally to meet his wife in the garden of Sir Thomas Parry's house.

Meanwhile the friends of the youthful couple were not idle. Ann of Denmark, the Queen of James, interceded warmly in their behalf, but in vain; the suspicious monarch had heard of their stolen interviews, and sent orders that Seymour should be more strictly confined in the Tower, and the Lady Arabella removed to Durham and kept in custody of the Bishop.

It was the only occasion in her short and miserable existence in which the cruelly persecuted woman appears to have acted with the spirit of her birth and rank. On the order being read to her she resolutely refused compliance; declared it was illegal, and dared the officers to carry it into execution. It was a vain protest; the minions of her tyrant carried her forcibly from the house of Sir Thomas Parry in her bed, which they placed in a boat, and rowed her up the river, amidst the half-expressed murmurings of the spectators.

A reign later, and the people would have torn them to pieces in their indignation, in order to rescue her, but Cromwell and his fellow-laborers in the cause of the liberties of England had not yet made their voices heard. The storm was only beginning to gather, silently and scarcely observed. The first thunder peal had not been heard.

At Barnet, agitation of mind, arising from the outrage she had been subjected to, brought on a violent fever, and the physician who attended the royal prisoner took upon himself to stay her journey, and set forward himself to London to report her condition to James, who answered that she should proceed if he were king.

Shamed by the indignant reproaches of his Queen and the murmurs of the few nobles about the court who dared to express an opinion, he allowed her to remain a month at Highgate, in the house of the Earl of Essex, to recover her health, where she remained till the 3d of June, 1611, when she effected her escape on the very day the Bishop of Durham set out for the north to prepare for her reception ostensibly as an honored guest, but in reality a prisoner.

A project of flight to the Continent had been carefully concocted between herself and her husband through the medium of mutual friends, and they must have been warm ones, to have dared the despotism of their persecutor, backed by the terrors of the Star Chamber, an institution so utterly reckless of every principle of humanity and justice, it can only be compared with the Inquisition of Spain or the Chambre Ardente of France. The latter had some show of reason for its existence, it having been established to put an end to the secret poisonings which so long terrified Paris.

A French vessel had been engaged to lie off Gravesend, and convey the fugitives from England. When the day was fixed and everything prepared, the Lady Arabella, according to Winwood, having disguised herself in male attire, walked forth, attended by a gentleman named Markham. After proceeding nearly two miles on foot, they reached the inn, where another friend, a Mr. Crompton, was waiting with horses. In this disguise, although greatly terrified by her apprehensions of pursuit, the royal fugitive rode, without drawing rein, to Blackwall, where she found boats and attendants waiting to convey her to Gravesend, where she expected to find her husband. Unfortunately Seymour had been delayed in making his escape from the Tower, which he did in the disguise of a physician. The captain of the vessel, perfectly aware of the perilous nature of the commission he had undertaken, refused to wait, and dropped down the river, despite the entreaties of the agonized wife.

Seymour, on reaching the place of rendezvous, which he eventually did, found the lady gone, and hired the vessel of a collier for forty pounds to land him in Flanders.

No sooner was the news of the Lady Arabella's flight conveyed to court, than the utmost consternation prevailed. The terror of the king was pitiable. It was soon asserted that the fugitives were to be received in the Netherlands by the Spanish commander, and brought back to London at the head of an army, to establish them upon the throne.

The idea of such a conspiracy was perfectly absurd; but the recollection of the terrors inspired by the Spanish Armada in the preceding reign was sufficiently vivid to cause it to be pretty generally believed.

Couriers were hurried off in all directions. Ships and boats swarmed upon the Thames to seize and examine all outward-bound vessels. Despite this activity, Seymour escaped; but the Lady Arabella was not so fortunate. The vessel which she fondly trusted would convey her to that freedom she had never been permitted to enjoy, was boarded in mid-channel, the unhappy Princess seized and brought back a prisoner to the Tower.

For a time the high-spirited woman bore up against her persecutor, declaring that as her husband was free she did not care for herself. Friends ventured to intercede for her a second time, but in vain. James proved inexorable. Finally the mind of the royal captive gave way, and she became a pitiable lunatic.

Lady Arabella Stuart died in the prison to which her merciless tyrant had condemned her, on the 27th of September, 1615, one of the numerous victims of a pedant king who sent the gallant Raleigh to the block, who was suspected, in conjunction with his infamous favorite, the Earl of Somerset, of poisoning his eldest son Prince Henry, the hope of the nation, whose virtuous youth gave promise of a better manhood than his narrow-minded, vicious father's.

Previous to the trial of the Earl for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, James betrayed great distress of mind, sent the prisoner, who had declared that the king dared not bring him to trial, soothing messages, promising that under any circumstances his life should be spared and his estates exempt from forfeiture.

When the guilty favorite appeared at the bar of the House of Peers, two officers stood beside him with large cloaks ready to throw over his head in the event of his speaking anything against the king. They had orders to drag him from the court, and one of them had the royal signet as a warrant for such an outrageous proceeding, had it become necessary, which it did not.

There must have been some terrible secret between James and the Earl of Somerset to account for such strange precautions.

◆

AN EPIGRAM: FROM THE FRENCH.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

"Now tell me, my friend," said the Duchess of Maine,
To a witty gallant at a party, one night,
"What the difference may be—I prithee explain—
Between *me* and the *clock* that is ticking in sight!"
"Just this," he replied, "that the *clock* by its face
Is made to remind us, by night and by day,
Of the march of the *Hours*; while, as to your Grace,
You make us *forget* they are passing away!"

◆

Beards and Behavior.

What *would* men do without their beards and mustaches on Sundays, when they are compelled to sit still for the space of an hour, and cannot go out in the *paw*-ses for either a smoke or a drink? That's the time they take to bite off the ends of mustaches, twist them into fantastic shapes, and comb out their beards with their fidgety fingers. Talk of the "nervousness of women!" Thank goodness, they know how to sit still! I can think of nothing but a hyena in a small cage, when I see a man "*in meetin'*." It is edifying to see his abortive attempts to behave.

FANNY FERN.

◆

An Extraordinary Newspaper Quarrel — The "Evening Infallible" on the "Morning Oracle."

[From the "Evening Infallible," Jan. 31.]

Though most reluctant to trouble our readers with our personal and peculiar concerns, and sensible that it is the height of impertinence to do so, we cannot refrain from once more adverting to the controversy which has been raging for the last ten days between ourselves and the Morning Oracle, on the subject of the weather in January. As we are determined now to bring the debate to a conclusion, we shall, with our usual impartiality, give a brief summary of the arguments on both sides. On Wednesday last, the Oracle, as many of our readers will recollect, came out with the extraordinary assertion, that the weather is generally cold in January. Whether this egregious falsehood originated in the preposterous ignorance of the booby who *mis*-conducts the Oracle, or in his notorious contempt for veracity, we leave it to a candid public to determine. Be that as it may, we immediately set the Oracle right in our paper of the same evening, by stating the *fact* that the weather is *seldom* cold in January. To this the Oracle, with its usual intemperate violence, replied, that the weather is *always* cold in January!! To which we, of course, replied, that the weather is *never* cold in January. Will our readers believe it? Yesterday, stubbornly resisting all conviction, and plunging deeper and deeper in the mire of ignorance and duplicity, the Oracle had the assurance to assert that the weather is cold as a cucumber in January!!!

We have omitted the personalities and vituperations with which the Oracle has loaded us in the course of this controversy. We disdain to recriminate. We consider all personalities beneath a gentleman, and, wrapt up in dignified silence, we only smile at the abuse of this imbecile idiot, this sneaking petty-larceny fellow, this thrice-sodden dunce, this demon in human shape—we mean, in a shape intended to be human—this red-haired, blear-eyed, low-browed, long-eared donkey, this shirtless ruffian, this walking corruption, this drinking, swearing, fighting, lying, slandering, moral assassin, this ninety-nine times whipped, and nine hundred and ninety-nine times kicked poltroon—this, in short—this editor of the Oracle! Once for all, to put an end to all controversy, we assure the Oracle, point blank, and to his utter confusion, that the weather in January is as hot as Vesuvius."

◆

Look at the Preacher.

[From the Hartford Religious Herald.]

Look at the preacher. By so doing, you animate and help him. He catches inspiration from your beaming face and eyes. Observing you thus attentive, he will endeavor to impart from week to week what is worthy of your attention, what is of real value to your souls. Never, during the sermon, sit with your head down in your hands, or on the railing of the pew before you, for to the preacher, the homeliest part of you is the top of your head.

CRADLE SONG.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Sleep, sleep, my darling—
Sleep, while the darkness tarries;
Sleep, sleep, my darling,
Morn is far away;
Sleep, sleep, my little May,
Dream while the shadows stay,
Till over the hill-tops
Breaketh the light of day!

Slumber, my dear one,
While my sad heart and sorrow
Keep their pale vigils
Over thy cradle-bed;
Sleep, little shining head,
Sleep, while the dark is spread,
While my sad heart and sorrow
Dream of hopes long dead!

Sleep, while thy fair face,
Shining in its golden nimbus,
Through the spectral darkness
Glimmers like a star!
Sleep, while I dream of *him*—
Sleep till the splendors dim,
Over the mountain rim,
Herald the Morn from far.

◆

FILIPPO, THE BANDIT;

OR, THE

Necromancer of Monte Gargano

By CARLOTTA KINGSLEY,
AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERY OF NO. 27."

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER GUISEPA.

To rightly comprehend the *denouement* which closed the last chapter, it will be necessary to retrace our way a little in our story, and relate what occurred at the palazzo as soon as the body of the Marchese was lowered into the cemetery, beneath the church of Santi Apostoli.

So impatient was the Marchesa that the services should be speedily concluded, that had she not exercised great self-control, she would have left the church with indecent haste.

Three hours previous she would not have been thus pressed, perhaps, but just before she left the palazzo for the Cathedral, news of great moment reached her ears.

A confidential messenger brought her word that Angelo Capello was nearing the city with a band of noble followers, and that before midday they would reach Foggia and expect hospitable and courtly entertainment at the palazzo.

As may be expected, this intelligence threw the Marchesa into an accession of wrathful perplexity, for she wished no witnesses to the perfidious plot soon to be executed. And another reason of equal importance caused her to experience a degree of alarm which far from softened her irritable temper.

She reflected that Angelo Capello was the accepted lover of Bianca, and his arrival at this inopportune moment would completely overturn her plans regarding the Signorita. She therefore resolved that her daughter should either wed her favorite Concini immediately, or else she should be spirited away from Foggia during Capello's stay.

When she returned to the palazzo, therefore, she commanded her daughter's attendance, and lost no time in broaching the subject which was uppermost in her mind.

"Ah, my mother," cried Bianca, already nearly death-stricken with grief. "Pray spare me now. I am far from well, and I beseech you do not name this hateful subject to me again."

"I shall both name it and force you to listen to what I may have to say," was the Marchesa's unfeeling reply. "I have already borne with your caprices longer than patience demands, so now I am prepared to enforce my commands. Do you hear me, Signorita?"

"Yes, Marchesa," the girl languidly replied, "but I cannot obey you. Though you were to kill me, I cannot obey your commands."

"Doubtless you fancy your brave cavalier, the young Signor Capello, will ere long come to claim you as his bride; but what if I were to tell you that he has found consolation in the smiles of another Signorita, fairer than the one he left behind him in the dull town of Foggia?"

"'Tis a base, an unfounded slander!" cried the usually gentle girl, stung by the Marchesa's false and cruel words.

"How know you it is false?" asked her mother slowly. "Stranger things than this have happened."

"I know it is false, because I have not yet lost faith in mankind; because I know that Angelo Capello is true to the love he swore to me, and because I have lately received a fresh assurance of his devotion."

"Ha!" cried the Marchesa suddenly, fearful lest the Signorita had also heard the news which had reached herself. "What proof have you received, and when, and how?"

"Nothing but a message, Madame, and that a day or two since."

"Who brought it to you?" the Marchesa demanded.

Bianca was silent. She could not, she dared not betray Filippo.

"The Marchesa speaks to you, Signorita."

"I cannot reply to you, my mother."

"Still contumacious!" exclaimed the Signora. "I have lately bethought me of a novel expedient whereby your obedience may be secured."

Bianca stood before her mother unmoved. She had endured so much that day that her senses seemed benumbed, and her mother's threats sounded in her ears like the harmless ripple of a petulant stream.

"You appear to think my words of little moment, Signorita. I believe I have threatened too long. It is time I proceeded to carry them into execution."

Still Bianca stirred not, and her eyes remained fixed upon the ground.

"Only one more opportunity will I give you, and that will be after you have listened to what I am now about to say to you. Do you remember the story of Guisepa, King Ludovico's daughter, who, for contumacy and rebellion, was cast with her lover into the vaults of Santi Apostoli?"

Bianca looked up quickly.

"I do," she said.

"Would you fancy such an abode for yourself?"

"I care not."

"You care not? Are you mad? Are you beside yourself with obstinacy?"

"No, no, my mother. I am only sick of life, and care not how soon I leave it."

"Is not life of value when you think of Capello?"

"Doubtless, Madame; but you force the hated Concini continually upon my thoughts, and such companionship, even in fancy, is abhorrent to me."

"I know of a companionship which is more dreadful, and you shall taste of its horrors. Return to your chamber, Signorita, and remain there until you receive my permission to come forth."

Bianca obeyed, only too glad of this coveted respite. She cared not if she never again recovered her liberty, for a strange premonition of danger haunted her, and she almost feared to trust herself abroad.

She therefore hastened to her chamber with alacrity, and once there, gave herself up to reflections which were necessarily of the most harrowing description.

The Marchesa, however, as soon as her daughter left her presence, dispatched a messenger to Concini, and the Signor presently appearing, the two concocted a plan which was put into immediate execution.

"Thank you for the suggestion, dear Marchesa," said Concini. "It is both opportune and worthy of your ready perception. Adrian of Palermo is still in Foggia, and I will summon him without delay."

Concini left the palazzo, and in an incredibly short time he returned with the *soi disant* physician.

The two lost no time in repairing to the Marchesa's apartments, and that lady having awaited their return with an impatience bordering upon frenzy, they were welcomed with enthusiasm.

"We came hither in such haste, Marchesa, that I had no time to acquaint the physician with the nature of your daughter's malady, so that task remains to be fulfilled. I judged that you could best enlighten him regarding her ailment."

"'Tis an ailment that frequently attacks willful young Signoritas," replied the lady. "The disease, I think, is located near the heart, or at least that organ appears to be torpid when it should be active, and active when it should be quite at rest. This unnatural state results in disobedience to wholesome laws, opposition to wise counsels, persistent obstinacy, and many other evils which usually follow in the train of this troublesome disease. I have tried domestic remedies, but my treatment of her case has produced no effect; in fact, I grieve to say that I fear her symptoms have assumed a more alarming form, so I have summoned you, Signor, hoping your superior skill and experience may aid me."

"I fully understand you, Signora," Adrian of Palermo replied. "But the remedies I employ are severe. Do you wish the disease eradicated at any cost?"

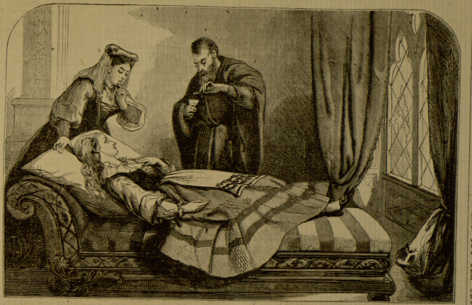
"At any cost, save one," the Marchesa returned.

She beckoned the physician nearer her side, and asked several questions in a low tone.

"Assuredly it is so, Marchesa," he said, after listening for some moments. "Nothing can be more easily accomplished. Only discretion and secrecy are necessary. Where is the Signorita?"

"In her chamber, where she will remain until she receives my permission to withdraw."

"You did well, Excellenza. A reported illness will do much to aid us in our plans. Let it immediately become known throughout the palazzo that the Signorita is ill, and that physicians have been summoned to attend her."



ADRIAN OF PALERMO ADMINISTERING A SLEEPING POTION TO THE SIGNORITA BIANCA.

"I have already thought of that," replied the Marchesa, "and such a report is already rife."

"Then nothing need delay our visit to the Signorita's bedside, and the remedies I have named may be promptly administered."

"The sooner the better, Signor;" and rising, the Signora beckoned Adrian to follow her.

Concini prudently remained behind. His presence would have been neither appropriate nor opportune. So he occupied his time during the absence of the others in reading various letters and documents which he drew from the bosom of his silk doublet.

To what those letters referred, why it was their perusal brought the pallor of death to his cheek, and why his hand trembled as he hastily returned them to his bosom, is a mystery which future events were destined to reveal.

Preceded by a servant who announced their coming, the Marchesa and Adrian of Palermo visited the Signorita's apartment.

Assuming the air of a tender, sympathetic practitioner, Adrian addressed the young girl, and endeavored to insinuate himself into her confidence. But there is something in the character, manner or appearance of every knave which intuitively repels an innocent, pure-minded person, and Bianca felt that the new-comer was a foe in disguise.

She nevertheless accepted and drank the potion he prepared, not because she acknowledged herself sick, but in her present restless, perturbed state, she was incapable of realizing her own feelings and prejudices, and was too weak to oppose the will of others.

"Signorita," the physician said, as he held the glass to her lips, "this magical liquid will quickly remove the languor which now oppresses you. Grief so depresses you that nature demands assistance before a reaction can take place."

Bianca swallowed the potion without comment, and after some other trifling instructions Adrian was about to retire, but the Marchesa detained him.

"Stay, Signor," she said. "I wish you to see that the effect of the potion is what you desire. Pardon me if I claim too much of your time. A mother's anxiety for the welfare of her only child must be my excuse."

"A nobler excuse could not be named," replied Adrian. "Your anxiety is but natural, Excellenza, and I will cheerfully remain until the Signorita begins to amend. Ah, I already see that the magical liquor is taking effect. Observe how her nerves seem to be quieted; directly a gentle sleep will steep her senses, and when she awakes, Marchesa, do not fear but that your daughter will be quite recovered."

"The saints grant it may be so!" echoed the Marchesa fervently, but the look she bent upon her daughter was more indicative of subtle cupidity than maternal tenderness.

Her eyes gleamed triumphantly as she saw the quick effect the physician's prescription had upon her daughter. Bianca made every effort to retain possession of her faculties. Though her head drooped upon her bosom, and her eyelids closed despite herself, she would strive to arouse herself and defy the influence of the baneful drug.

"Madame," she said to the Marchesa, "I know this is not a natural drowsiness. The torpor I feel cannot be caused by fatigue or natural sleep. I fear—I cannot but think—"

The words which followed were incoherent, her voice was scarcely audible, and even while she spoke the pretended medicine had accomplished its purpose.

The Marchesa sprang forward.

"Be not so impatient, Signora. This sleep will last for a long time, and there is no need of useless haste. Remember that we can do nothing until midnight, and there still remains an hour of day. There are other arrangements which must be perfected before your plan can be fully executed. I will seek the Signor Concini and confer with him, if it is your Excellenza's wish to remain here."

The Marchesa bowed her head in acquiescence, and Adrian of Palermo left the room.

The Signorita lay extended upon her couch, pale and motionless, as though life were extinct. Not a limb stirred, not a muscle moved; the breath came imperceptibly from between parted lips, and her pale hands lay clasped over a motionless breast.

The Marchesa looked at her critically. No fear seemed to trouble her that her diabolical plan might have succeeded but too well, and that the daughter whose happiness she was plotting to destroy, might already be beyond her power to harm. Reckless ambition, a spirit of intrigue which stopped at nothing, a heart wherein every unwomanly attribute had taken up its abode, had rifled this mother of maternal instinct, and she now looked upon her daughter only as a means by which she might accomplish a desirable end.

The news had spread throughout the palazzo that the Signorita was attacked by a sudden, violent, and it was feared a mortal disease. So it was a matter of no surprise that the Marchesa should remain in her daughter's chamber, and that other attendance should be dispensed with.

The church of Santi Apostoli was distant from the palazzo but a stone's throw. A gallery connected the two structures, and it was through this gallery that a small procession passed that day at midnight.

Guided by the light of feeble torches, it slowly approached the church, entering which, it as slowly and solemnly deposited the burden which four of the party bore before the high altar.

What followed was done secretly and with the utmost caution, and when the mission which brought them thither was accomplished, when the opening in the pavement was raised, when the burden they bore was lowered into the vault beneath, and the stone replaced, then the procession took its way back to the palazzo as secretly and as silently as it had come.

The Marchesa was about returning to her apartments, when a voice pronounced her name, and turning reluctantly about, she beheld Adrian of Palermo at her side.

"It will be my office to return to Santi Apostoli, will it not, Marchesa?"

"Assuredly," she replied, with some surprise. "I judged that you remained there. Why are you here, Signor?"

"Because my attendance yonder is not a necessity until day dawns; so I came hither to have a parting word with the Marchesa."

"For what purpose, Signor?"

For some reason a sudden dislike arose in the lady's mind toward the wily Sicilian.

"Let us step further within the palace, and I will tell you, Excellenza."

Commanding the attendance of one other follower, the Marchesa led the way to the same oratory where, three nights before, the secret cabal was held.

"If what you have to say is a matter of much importance, let me hear it at once, Signor."

"It is a matter of great importance, Madame; it concerns me deeply, and may also affect yourself more seriously than you may suspect."

"Explain yourself, Signor."

With irreverent *abandon* she reclined against a *prie-dieu*, and with difficulty repressing a yawn, again begged the physician to name his errand.

"It concerns the Necromancer of Monte Gargano," he said.

Instantly the Marchesa's manner changed. The indolent, nonchalant air of fatigue which was so apparent a moment before gave place to extreme alarm, and with breathless eagerness she asked:

"What say you, Signor? What say you of the Necromancer of Monte Gargano?"

"He is in Foggia."

The Marchesa fell back.

"Here?" she exclaimed. "Here in Foggia? Then I am undone! There is but one power on earth that I fear, and that power is held by the Necromancer of Monte Gargano."

Adrian of Palermo looked at her with fresh interest.

"Why do you fear him thus?" he asked.

"Why? Why is he feared at all? Why do people speak of him with trembling lips, why do they hold their breath when his name is spoken, and why is his approach the signal of universal fear?"

"But why should the Marchesa Strozzi fear this man?"

"For the same reason that others fear him, Signor. Because he is a master of the Black Art; because he deals in unholy mysteries; because the dead obey his voice, and because he directs and controls the living by unhallowed means."

"Are there not other reasons why you should fear him, Marchesa?"

It would seem as though common humanity should have deterred one from adding to the Marchesa's terror. The fear she had expressed of the Necromancer of Monte Gargano was no assumed terror. Her face was livid with pallor, her lips were parched and contracted with excitement, and her hands were so tightly clasped together that the very nails were pressed into the flesh with cruel force.

The Marchesa looked at Adrian inquiringly.

"What other reason have I for fearing his power?"

"This reason: he has discovered your designs, and will frustrate them if he can."

The Marchesa drew herself up.

"It cannot be."

"It can be, Signora, and it *is*."

"I cannot, I will not believe it. No one knows of what I propose but those most intimately interested. Concini begged hard before he could gain my permission to include you in our councils."

"Nevertheless the Necromancer has discovered all."

"Again I say it cannot be true. He could not—"

Adrian of Palermo interrupted her.

"The Marchesa forgets that this strange man has the power to discover whatever he wishes to know. The powers of the air aid him in acquiring knowledge, and they obey his behests whenever he calls upon them."

"Alas! it is but too true," cried the Marchesa, in a despairing tone. But presently she roused herself, and asked, with animation:

"But, Signor, is it not possible that this man may be attached to our interests? May he not be bribed to help us? Is it not possible?" And animated by the thought, she became enthusiastic in her utterance. "Is it not possible, Signor?" she again asked. "Think what an incalculable benefit his coöperation would be."

"It is not possible, Marchesa," Adrian of Palermo replied. "The Necromancer of Monte Gargano is bound, heart and soul, to the cause of the people. He is a member of many of their secret organizations, and much of their strength is derived from the aid they receive from him."

The Marchesa clasped her hands in despair.

"Then ruin and defeat threaten us," she cried. "The promises I made the French King, I fear, will never be fulfilled; the reward I hoped would be mine I can never claim, and I must supinely await the arrival of another viceroy who will supplant me; and thus I shall see myself in a more wretched state than before I stained my soul with the foul crime of—"

"Name it not, Excellenza," said Adrian. "My remedies must not be coupled with any opprobrious epithets in my hearing. What has been done was done for the best, and it may be that your plans will not be frustrated."

"How can it be prevented?"

"By the aid of a power more potent even than the arts which this dread Necromancer employs."

The Marchesa started forward, and grasping the speaker's arm, exclaimed:

"Tell me—tell me quickly!"

Adrian of Palermo replied by but one word.

"*Death!*"

The Marchesa's hand fell from its hold upon Adrian's arm.

"Death has no power over him," she said.

"He is a mortal," returned the other. "Know you not that when death lays him low, the Necromancer of Monte Gargano will be like other men? By the arts which he now employs he may summon the dead from the dread regions below; he may bind them to his will, and they may not refuse to obey him, but a fearful price is to be paid for this power. The devil is his master, and he never fails to claim his dues. Have you not heard how their compact was sealed in blood?"

"No, Signor."

"'Tis true. For four years and a day the Necromancer of Monte Gargano is to have sovereign command over the powers of the air. By their aid he will control many affairs on earth, and whatever he commands will be accomplished. But at the expiration of that time he will pay the price the Evil One demands. The devil will claim his soul, the Necromancer of Monte Gargano will die, and then his reward will be meted out to him."

The Marchesa mused a moment in silence.

"Four years and a day!" she said, as if to herself. "Is it known to you, Signor, when that time will expire?"

"It is. Six nights from the present moment his power will be at an end; the earth will be rid of his presence, and the Marchesa Strozzi will have no further cause to fear the dreaded Necromancer of Monte Gargano."

"Six nights! Must six mortal days and nights elapse in base inactivity, waiting for this man to die? What golden opportunities may not be lost in that time."

"Patience, Excellenza, patience!"

"Patience, Signor! Why should you preach patience to me?" exclaimed the Marchesa angrily. "What hopes have you at stake that a delay of six days will ruin?"

"Your hopes will not be ruined," said Adrian. "King Charles still lingers in Naples; he finds it impossible to tear himself away from the gay capital; he thinks the town of Foggia and the province of Apulia so securely his prize that I greatly doubt if he will march to its capture. So a delay of even twice six days will be of no great moment. The indolent people will not clamor for a ruler in the dead Marchese's place, while Concini remains with apparent authority to administer the laws. He did well to proclaim himself provisional governor until the wishes of King Ferdinand should become known, for thus all spies are blinded to the true state of affairs, and your own authority is greatly strengthened."

"Six days!" the impatient Marchesa again regretfully repeated.

Then she suddenly looked into Adrian's face, and said:

"Signor!"

"Excellenza!"

"Your own skill is great. Where is this dreaded Necromancer?"

"In Foggia, as I said, Marchesa."

"Yes; but where, and how is he lodged?"

"I know not. I saw him yesternight on the *strada* before the palazzo. He knew not that he was recognized, but when once I have seen a face I never forget, and the Necromancer of Monte Gargano is one ever to be remembered."

"Dost thou fancy, Signor, that he will walk the streets again?"

"Aye, Signora, without doubt."

She was silent for another period.

"Could it not be done?" she asked almost pleadingly.

"What, Signora?"

"Could not the six days be shortened? Could not the Necromancer be sent to his dread master?"

"No."

"Wherefore not?"

"Because a charm that neither steel, nor poison, nor any other thing can destroy, guards his life until the appointed time."

"Do you also fear him, Signor?"

"Nay, I fear him not, Marchesa. I regard him with other feelings than fear. I hate the Necromancer of Monte Gargano."

"Then you would also rejoice in his death?"

Adrian of Palermo turned upon the Marchesa a face full of hatred, revenge and every other evil impulse.

"His death would relieve me of a burden I cannot shake off until that time," he said.

The Marchesa silently stretched out her hand, and grasped that of her companion in a fraternal clasp.

"Then why not try your skill?" she again pleaded. "Send to him some rank poison that would eat its way into his life before he could become aware of its deadly aim. If he is but mortal he cannot withstand your wondrous potions. I cannot, cannot wait those weary six days. I feel a premonition that everything will be lost by the delay. So pray listen to my request, dear Signor."

She laid her hand persuasively upon Adrian's arm, and looked into his face so appealingly that he might have yielded. It was hard for the man to refuse the prayer of a noble, a beautiful and a powerful woman, and he wished to do her this favor.

He opened his lips to give the coveted promise, and the Marchesa's face already glowed with delight, when before Adrian's mental vision there arose the image of a grim avenger, and turning suddenly away from the temptress, he fled from the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

ESCAPE.

Filippo was the first to break the horrible silence which fell upon the captives when the body of the Signorita Bianca was lowered into the vault.

"What new piece of deviltry is this?" he exclaimed. "The Signorita was well but yesterday, and now she too is numbered with the dead."

The Marchese, struck to the heart by this new and sudden calamity, cast himself upon the body, and gave vent to his grief in loud, heart-rending sobs and groans.

"My daughter! my precious Bianca!" he cried. "'Twas for thy sake I welcomed a return of life; but what a greeting is this! I who hoped shortly to clasp thee to my bosom, see thee now a lifeless corpse. Alas! I am beset and hedged in with sorrows I suspect not until they burst upon me. Thy pale features tell of a mighty struggle, *carissima*. I know that thy last hours were imbittered by unspeakable anguish, and thou wert left to bear it alone, poor dove, for thy mother, thy mother was doubtless the cruel falcon that goaded and frightened thee to death."

Grief choked the father's utterance, and again he fell nearly fainting beside the bier.

"*Maestro*," said Fra Ignazio, "thou canst surely help the Signorita. Repeat the magical incantations which restored the Marchese to life, and this innocent maiden will also live again."

The Necromancer's face changed not its grave expression. He drew nearer the corpse, and bent low over the pale face to study the features well.

The lamp which was lowered with the body threw ample light around, and the magician, holding it in his hand, remained for some seconds intently regarding the pale, still features before him.

Presently something attracted his eye which had escaped the notice of his companions. Hastily giving the lamp to Filippo, he took a slip of paper from the sable girdle clasped about the young girl's waist.

"Perchance this may reveal something," he said, and without a moment's hesitation he broke the seal.

His eye rapidly glanced down the page. A happier light spread over his countenance, and extending his hand to the Marchese, he said:

"Rise, Excellenza, rise! Your daughter will presently be returned to us. Her apparent death is but another of the Marchesa's ignoble plots. The Signorita preferred death to a dishonorable marriage, and her mother has commanded that she shall taste of its bitterness without gaining any of its comforts. Read this missive."

"It is in the Marchesa's own handwriting," said the Marchese, eagerly seizing the paper, and then he read aloud:

"Bianca, it will rest with yourself whether or not the tragedy of Guisepa shall be repeated in your own case. You now find yourself a captive in a horrible prison-house. Your companions are the dead of past ages, though some are of your own blood and kindred. Your heart throbs, and you tremble with horror. Perchance you will again and again relapse into unconsciousness, when the full horror of your situation bursts upon you. But reflect that you courted this terrible alternative; that in braving my anger you paved the way to your present punishment.

"An opportunity to escape remains open to you. Accept the proposal I made you; become Concini's bride, and you shall be set free. Adrian of Palermo will return to the church an hour before day to receive your reply. If you accede to my wishes, well and good; but if you remain obdurate, the vault will be closed upon you for ever.

"Consider well your decision. Take the lamp and survey the charnel-house where you are imprisoned, and fancy what a lingering death in such a place must be. Search for the ghastly skeletons of Guisepa and her lover, and then imagine, if you can, what your own fate may be.

"Remember that an hour before dawn you may leave your horrible dungeon if you will, but if you refuse, you choose inevitable death. Your last opportunity will be passed."

The billet was without signature, but no one could have a doubt of its authorship, and indignation against the Marchesa became intense.

The Necromancer's brow darkened with unspoken wrath. Filippo and Fra Ignazio looked the horror they had not the power to express, while the Marchese muttered between clenched teeth:

"For each and every crime this Jezebel shall be called to account!"

The Necromancer again bent over the unconscious Bianca, and in response to the Marchese's prayer, sprinkled upon her face a few drops of the same elixir which had once before that day accomplished such a wonderful result.

The drug which Adrian of Palermo had administered was already beginning to lose its power, so the magician's antidote had an immediate effect.

He waved Fra Ignazio and Filippo away from beside the bier.

"She must have air," he said; "and besides, it is best that when consciousness returns she should not be startled by seeing too many about her. Let her father's face be the first upon which her eyes may rest when she uncloses them."

Bending over his daughter with passionate tenderness and anxiety, the Marchese watched the faint flush which, overspreading her face, first indicated the return of life. He could scarcely restrain a wild shout of triumph as he saw her bosom heave, and felt upon his cheek her quivering breath.

Care had been taken to remove her from her fearful couch, and when she opened her eyes at last she found herself upon the tablet which had also served as her father's bed.

The stare of semi-unconsciousness was in her eyes when her lids were lifted. She looked from the one anxious face bending over her to the other in dull wonder. At last her lips unclosed.

"Where am I?" she said. "What place is this, and who are you who look so like the dead?"

"Do you not know me, Bianca?" asked the Marchese. "Do you not know your father, my daughter?"

"My father?" she repeated. "Is he not dead? Did they not bury him in Santi Apostoli?"

Then passing her hand feebly across her forehead as memory returned, she looked about her, and the dreadful place being revealed, she exclaimed in a loud tone:

"Is life a thing of the past for me also? Am I numbered with the dead, and are you the shades of the departed?"

"No, my poor daughter," said the Marchese. "We have both been foully dealt by. Death seemingly claimed us both, but, thanks to a providential interference, we are both saved, and will presently return among the living. This horrible place was assigned us for our prison; here we were doomed to expire in mortal agony; but take heart, *cara mia*, we are both safe, and our persecutors will presently be confounded."

Bianca's eyes rested upon the other face bending above her. A look, half of inquiry, half of recognition, lighted up her features.

"Are you not the Necromancer of Monte Gargano?" she asked.

"I am," he said.

"Then we are safe!" she responded, and closing her eyes again, she seemed to give herself up to a blissful sense of security.

"Yes, we are safe," the Marchese echoed; "safe from danger from the world above, but—"

The Necromancer checked him, and finished the sentence himself.

"And safe from the evil which an hour ago stared us so inexorably in the face, Signorita. Are you able to rise and listen to what we may have to say to you?"

"Yes," she promptly replied. "I am quite myself again, and can listen to and heed whatever you may have to say."

"It is well," he returned. "Daylight will soon be upon us, and 'tis to you we now look for our lives."

"How?" she asked in wonder.

"Why do you think we are here, Signorita?" asked the magician. "What strange freak do you fancy made us seek this dreadful charnel-house?"

"I know not. Possibly by your great knowledge and skill in hidden arts you discovered the Marchesa's designs and came hither to defeat them."

"You are right, Signorita; but there are some affairs that I cannot control with all my art. For instance, I cannot, unaided, escape from this place. We are close prisoners here. The only way of exit is through that opening above us, and that we cannot reach."

Bianca looked up fearfully to the movable slab in the ceiling, and shuddered.

The Necromancer continued:

"Even should we succeed in reaching it, our enemies would seize us, and a worse fate would befall us."

"Then let us all die here together," said the maiden resolutely. "Let no cry of terror or appeal ascend to cheer our tormentors. We will baffle their malicious hopes, and deprive them of their triumph by dying in silence, as though we freely chose our fate."

"Such a course is not necessary, Signorita. Much remains for us to do in the world above our heads. Our friends would suffer, and perhaps die as ignobly as ourselves, did we not make an effort to escape, and aid them."

"But how can it be done, *Maëstro*? We are not alone," she suddenly exclaimed. "I hear sounds from out the gloom yonder, and I fear our enemies are already upon us."

"Quiet yourself, Signorita. They are friends, two more unfortunates, who, like ourselves, are imprisoned here. Fra Ignazio and Filippo, come forward into the light!"

They obeyed, and being instantly recognized by the Signorita, her fears gave place to an added security, for even in this place she could not but feel contented, with her dearest friends about her.

"And Vito," she said, smiling graciously upon the pretended page.

"Vito no longer," said the Marchese, laying a caressing hand upon his daughter's shoulder. "Not Vito, but Filippo. I have heard of the bold assistance you rendered the supposed bandit, and while I question your right to interfere in such affairs, I yet rejoice that an innocent man's life has been saved."

Bianca blushed, yet she knew her father's gentle rebuke was just; and being sure that he secretly applauded her adventure, she kissed the hand which rested upon her shoulder, and turned again toward the Necromancer.

"Is there no other way for us to escape?" she asked, their terrible situation again flashing upon her with fresh vividness.

"You can save us, Signorita."

"I, *Maëstro*! In what way, prithee?"

The Necromancer opened the Marchesa's note, and held it before her so she might read its contents.

Every particle of color fled from her face as she did so. Her lips parted with horror, and covering her face with her hands, as though she would shut out everything from her sight, she cried:

"Will you too turn against me? Will you bid me return to the world above and marry this villain whom I abhor?"

"You mistake me," said the Necromancer quickly, as he saw that the Marchese and Filippo also misinterpreted his words. "We would all rather suffer the horrors of a lingering death than purchase life at the sacrifice of your happiness. This is my plan, Signorita, and I hope the deception it involves will not condemn it in the eyes of any present. The Marchesa says that Adrian of Palermo will shortly return to give you one more chance of life. Pretend to accept the condition named in this billet; return to the palazzo, but watch your opportunity, go secretly to the shrine of San Pietro, demand the assistance of two priests whom Father Ignazio will name, and bid them raise a certain section of the pavement which you will there see with certain guiding marks upon it. Cause the priests to remain behind the shrine to guard the spot, while you descend the secret staircase the raised stone will reveal. Follow the subterranean passage below until you come to a certain iron door. That door is the one which closed upon us, and imprisons us here. This key you must conceal in your clothing in such a way that the Marchesa will not discover it; without that you cannot free us, but with it you can give us our liberty."

"But can I appear to accede to the Marchesa's wishes without doing so in fact?"

"Assuredly. When you have secured our escape, we will repay the debt by watching over you. You need not fear the power of the Marchesa. Though she may seem to triumph, she will ultimately fail."

"I will do as you bid me, *Maëstro*," said Bianca. "I already know enough of your power to be assured that I may safely return to the palazzo, and acquiesce in whatever the Marchesa proposes, if I can be assured that you are free to aid and protect me. Will the Marchese return also?"

"That will be impossible, neither must the Marchesa know that your father lives. You must brave the trials which await you alone, Signorita. Think you that you are able?"

"Supported by the assurance of your help, I am able," returned Bianca steadily.

The Marchese spoke.

"Who, pray, is Adrian of Palermo?"

He had again taken the Marchesa's letter, and was scanning its threatening contents.

The brow of the Necromancer darkened with a heavy frown.

"He is one of whom every one should beware," he said. "If the Marchesa has secured his allegiance, her power for mischief is greatly increased. He deals in death as other men deal in merchandise. Life to him is of no greater moment than the idlest breeze that stirs. Many times have I thwarted his villainous schemes, and I trust that I may soon have a final reckoning with him."

Filippo responded with a hearty Amen.

"I also have an account to settle with Adrian of Palermo," he said. "If my fancy does not deceive me we shall soon have an opportunity of doing so."

A note of alarm was at this moment given by Fra Ignazio.

"There are footsteps above us," he said. "Doubtless they come to seek the Signorita."

His suspicion was correct. Not a moment was lost in replacing Bianca upon the bier. The lamp was again placed upon her breast, and was returned to its former position when the opening stone was again removed.

The coffin had been lowered into its place by means of leather thongs, and these not having been removed, it was a work of no difficulty to raise it again.

Standing below in the dark vault and looking up, the prisoners saw the figures of several men bending over the opening, and among them the Necromancer recognized the obese form of Adrian of Palermo.

He set his teeth firmly together as he thought of the evil the man had wrought, and in both his heart and in that of Filippo there raged a desire to take summary vengeance upon the fiend-like man.

Slowly Bianca, resting upon her horrible couch, was drawn up from out her foul dungeon.

When she reached the ceiling the voice of Adrian was heard speaking to her.

"Signorita," he said, "have you read the Marchesa's billet?"

"I have," was the timid reply.

"Do you accept or refuse her offered mercy?"

"Is there no other way for me to escape the horrors of this place?"

"None."

"Then I cannot refuse."

"You do well, Signorita."

A wicked laugh of triumph accompanied the words. The opening was darkened for a moment by the passing coffin, then it was closed entirely by the movable slab.

"She is safe," said the Marchese, heaving a sigh of relief.

The Necromancer replied:

"Not safe until we also are at liberty. If the Marchesa were to set spies upon her movements, we shall be in a pitiable plight, for I know no one whom she can trust with our secret."

"The Signora Inez Maestrelli has a kind heart," the Marchese began; but Filippo quickly exclaimed:

"Nay, Marchese, trust not that woman. You know her not. Her heart harbors plots and treasons even more horrible than those the Marchesa has conceived. Believe me, the Signora Inez Maestrelli will surely sting the hand that caresses her."

With Bianca the lamp had also been removed; so again the captives were compelled to pass many weary hours waiting in total darkness.

Time seemed to lag so heavily that one hour seemed to them like three, and they wondered at Bianca's delay, even before she and her escort could have had time to reach the palazzo.

Danger sharpened the Signorita's wits; for before she left the church, a plan suggested itself to her mind which would have been a credit even to the Necromancer of Monte Gargano himself.

By an adroit manœuvre she managed, in leaving the church, to pass by the shrine of San Pietro. One of the priests whom Fra Ignazio had named was kneeling before the altar engaged in early devotions.

"Let me linger a moment here, good Signor," said Bianca to her conductor. "I, who am but just rescued from a horrible fate, may surely be permitted to pause a moment to return thanks for my safety. I tremble and shudder with fear when I recall that terrible place from whence I am come, and before I leave the church I shall ease my soul of its fears by prayer and thanksgiving."

Adrian of Palermo opened his lips to protest against this detention, but Bianca quietly silenced him by gliding up to the altar and falling on her knees beside the priest.

Adrian dismissed the attendants who accompanied him, and leaning against a pillar at some distance from the altar, composedly resigned himself to the inevitable delay.

The Signorita's devotions were of a peculiar nature. She bowed her head as if in prayer, but in a cautious whisper she said:

"Fra Domenico!"

The priest paused in his orisons, and partly turned his head.

"Don't look at me," she said. "I am the Signorita Bianca Strozzi, and have need of your aid. Be cautious; we are watched by enemies."

"Speak on, Signorita," the priest replied, still appearing to continue his devout occupation.

"Fra Ignazio is in mortal danger, and has sent me to you for aid," the maiden said.

"Speak on, speak on," the priest repeated, with increased interest. "Fra Ignazio may safely apply to me for aid. I have missed him, and was even now praying that no evil might have befallen him."

"Unless you do as I bid you, he will die," Bianca next said.

"Then command me, Signorita."

"I will. There is a stone in the pavement behind this altar which can be raised. Domenico, do you hear me distinctly?"

"Aye, Signorita."

"As soon as I leave the altar, watch your opportunity; take Fra Girolamo with you; raise the stone, and one of you descend the hidden staircase beneath. Follow the subterranean passage below, and unlock the iron door you will find far beneath the church. Have you heard me, Domenico?"

"Aye, Signorita. Is there aught else?"

"Obey me, and you will set Fra Ignazio at liberty. Tell him I could not obey his instructions myself, for I fear the Marchesa will keep a strict watch upon me; but do as I have told you; do it *secretly* and *quickly*, and you will be thrice rewarded."

"I will obey you, Signorita. The church is unfrequented at this hour. Girolamo will soon be at his post, and together we will execute your commands."

"If you fail, Fra Ignazio will perish."

"We will not fail. A distressed brother we will rescue at any cost."

The conversation had been conducted so cautiously, that though Adrian of Palermo's eyes were kept constantly fixed upon the Signorita, he did not suspect the surreptitious interview.

Bianca was about rising from her knees when the priest softly detained her.

"The key, Signorita. Where can the key be found?"

"Pardon. I have it with me. I will kiss the steps of the altar, and leave the key beneath the cloth," she replied.

With consummate tact she did so, and then rising, rejoined her escort, who was already chafing with impatience, yet who dared not express his irritation.

"Your devotions were lengthy, Signorita," he said.

"Yes, Signor; yet not so lengthy as they should have been. I have much for which to atone, and much for which to give thanks."

The man's face gleamed in the early morning light with wicked glee, as at that moment they emerged from the church.

"The Marchesa's plan worked well," he said, with an insolent smile.

Bianca looked at him with cold scorn.

"I believe you were sent hither to conduct me to the palazzo," she said, "not to bore me with any unnecessary remarks."

Adrian of Palermo scowled angrily upon the audacious speaker:

"You use bold words, Signorita. 'Tis possible you forget that my ill-will is a possession few covet."

"Your ill-will or your good-will are matters of indifference to me," returned the Signorita. "You did not hesitate to give me a fatal drug when I had done nothing to offend you, and I much doubt if you would not prove a treacherous friend."

"Signorita, beware how you speak!" cried Adrian, hoarse with rage. "You have not yet escaped from my toils; you may again become my victim."

Bianca was too justly incensed against the ill-reputed physician, and felt too secure under the Necromancer's protection, to quail beneath Adrian's threatened glances.

"We shall understand each other better before long," he presently said, when he had tried in vain to intimidate her.

"The sooner the safer, Signor," she replied, and with a feeling of exultation she thought of another reckoning which threatened the double-dyed criminal.

"You are very brave, Signorita. One would have thought that a visit to the cemetery of Santi Apostoli would have made you a trifle timid, and that it would have steadied the flippancy of your tongue."

Bianca made no reply.

"'Tis possible a bit of news from a lover may sweeten your temper, Signorita," he insultingly continued. "The Marchesa told me an hour ago that the gallant young Capello had arrived in Foggia."

Bianca's manner instantly changed. Turning suddenly to her companion, her face aglow with pleasure, she forgot her scorn of Adrian, and joyfully exclaimed:

"Signor Capello in Foggia? Can this be true?"

"Aye, Signorita," was the reply, delivered in the *nonchalant* tone of one who holds in reserve a greater secret. "He posted hither with dispatches for the Viceroy, but the Marchesa has discovered many suspicious flaws in his papers, and she has therefore assumed one of the prerogatives of a sovereign."

"What has she done?" demanded Bianca breathlessly. "Where is Signor Capello at this moment?"

"In the dungeons of San Gregore," said Adrian, with malignant triumph.

"It cannot be. The Marchesa has not the right thus to imprison a loyal subject of the king."

"The King?" repeated Adrian. "What king?"

"King Ferdinand. What other sovereign can any true Italian mean?"

"Ferdinand is king no longer. Charles of France is our sovereign," was the reply.

"'Tis false!" cried Bianca, nearly beside herself with indignation. "Signor Capello shall be liberated!"

"Softly, Signorita, softly. Capello will not be liberated; but here we are at the Marchesa's *salon*, where the noble Concini awaits his bride."

Thus quickly recalled to the perils of her situation, Bianca turned suddenly about, as though she would have flown—she cared not whither.

Adrian suspected her purpose, and passing his arms quickly and firmly about her waist he lifted her from the ground. Motioning to an attendant who at that moment appeared, the door of the Marchesa's *salon* was thrown open, and Adrian carried his burden into the presence of the intriguing Excellenza, of the Signora Inez Maestrelli, Concini, and one other—a priest, who had been hastily summoned in expectation of the Signorita's return, and whose services were required to unite the reluctant Bianca and the unprincipled Concini in marriage.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

SILAS SHAW'S GOLD.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

What became of Silas Shaw's money was a subject that had agitated the community of W—— very much. The most celebrated detectives had worked upon the case for twelve months, yet failed to throw any light upon the subject; all was wrapped in mystery. Not a clue was found to work upon. It was only known that on a certain day during the dark period of our national struggle, Silas Shaw had drawn from the bank, in gold, the sum of twelve thousand dollars. Silas had grown gloomy as regarded the termination of the contest, declaring that "if the old flag was not triumphant he should leave the country." In preparation for that event he had secured his gold. A few months after, he widely declared his money stolen. He stated having buried the gold under the hearthstone, in a certain room of an untenanted house belonging to him—that after it was again occupied, at regular intervals he watched for the safety of his treasure. It remained where he had put it until a fortnight after the house was again vacant, when, going one day to see that all was right, he found the bricks thrown aside, the mortar scattered around, and the gold all gone.

This statement was somewhat substantiated by the tenants, who told of being very much annoyed by the frequent visits of Mr. Shaw to satisfy himself respecting the safety of the flues, he said. Believing something more than he said caused his visits, which to them seemed very mysterious, they determined to find another house, and did so; thus giving their landlord the opportunity of inspecting the flues to his perfect satisfaction.

Shaw hinted his distrust of these people; but to nothing by which to fix a well-grounded suspicion could he point. Shaw was never a very agreeable person, and generally he was disliked. After his loss, he grew so very gloomy and irritable that people avoided him everywhere.

There was, however, one redeeming point about him: his love for Mira, his daughter and only child. Hitherto, for her sake, he had tolerated Reginald Harland, a young man truly worthy of Mira's love, and of whom even her father could find but one fault, which in his eyes became a crime—Reginald's poverty.

After the loss of his gold, Silas declared himself a pauper, and telling Mira she must send her lover off, told Reginald himself to go.

"We are all paupers now," he said; "and paupers must think of something other than love making."

Reginald pleaded earnestly with Mira to fly with him. Bravely she resisted.

"Nay, nay, Reginald; I can never desert him during his trouble. I must come to you meriting blessings, not dreading the curse of disobedience and ingratitude," she said.

"Mira, I am going to make one more appeal. Possibly I may touch his heart," Reginald said.

And starting right off, he sought Silas Shaw, and pleaded earnestly and long for permission to wed his child.

"Is there nothing I can do to change your mind? Speak. Tell me what you demand?" Reginald asked.

With a mocking laugh, Silas answered:

"Yes; find my gold, or the one who stole it, and I will give you my child!"

With a disappointed look, Reginald turned away, saying:

"I find what men have failed to do—men whose thoughts and energy are given entirely to such work? You mock me, sir."

"Find my gold, and you'll find your bride," hissed Silas.

"I will work for gold, as much, and bring you," urged Reginald.

"No; I want only my own gold. Find that, if you wish my child."

Reginald could not go and tell Mira of his failure. Disheartened, he sought his home. With his head bowed on his hands, he sat and reviewed, over and over, the same ground so many had gone before, weighing every little point, every word he had heard of the mysterious affair, but as vainly as others. No light shone in on the darkness.

"'Tis useless," he said. "I will not attempt it, lest I become as mad as Silas Shaw himself. For mad he surely is, or he would not try me thus."

Then Mira's beautiful face and tearful eyes rose up before him, and again his brain began to work.

"Only in Heaven it is known, and there, I fear, it must remain," he said sadly, "unless some angel voice should whisper it to me."

Hours passed, and still he sat. All darkness—no light breaking in yet. Starting up, he threw off his coat, and dropped, heart-sick and weary, on his bed, exclaiming:

"I shall strive no more. My brain is burning with fever now."

A few moments, and he might have fallen into a little dose, from which he started, and cried out:

"I have it! I have it!"

Had some angel spirit—his mother, perchance—whispered in his ear, revealing the long-hidden secret? Perhaps he felt so.

Seeking Silas Shaw early the next day, Reginald said:

"Mr. Shaw, I accept your terms. I believe I have a clue by which I shall find the thief; probably your gold. That I may perfect my plan of detection, I beg that you will permit me to become an inmate of this house for a few nights, say a week. At the end of that time, if I do not solve this mystery, I shall give it up."

Again the old mocking laugh from Silas, and he said angrily:

"I understand you. You want to rob me of my child!"

"Send her away, to remain during the time I shall be here, if you have no confidence in me."

"I *will*," said Silas; adding, "Tell me what you wish to come here for?"

"Because I believe the thief is intimately acquainted here; aye, perhaps a member of your household. You may, if you choose, let it be thought you have more money or valuables about your premises, and I shall watch the result."

Silas agreed, and Reginald that night occupied the room adjoining the old man's.

Three nights passed without bringing him any more light on the subject. Twice during his midnight watches he stole to the door of Silas' room, attracted by a stealthy step within, to see only the old man moving about—he, perhaps, anxious and watchful too.

The fourth night, exhausted from the loss of rest and great excitement, Reginald dropped upon a couch, and soon after fell into a restless, uneasy slumber, from which he would start, and gaze wildly around. Many times he did this, until at length there came something to rivet his eager eyes upon.

Stealing noiselessly through his room, by the dimly burning taper he beheld a man, bearing a small lamp. He approached, opened the door, and passed out into the hall.

Up and after him, with a step as noiseless, stole Reginald. Through the long passages, down flight after flight of steps, into the very depths they went.

Carefully placing his lamp on the cellar floor, the man turned, and then for the first time his features were revealed to Reginald. They were not unknown.

Drawing from a hiding-place a small step ladder, the man approached the centre of the room, where Reginald beheld a cistern, over into which the man, dropping his ladder and again securing his lamp, descended slowly and cautiously. After him Reginald crept unnoticed. The place was dry, as he suspected. The lamp again placed on the floor, and something like a small pick drawn forth, the man went to work. A few bricks were removed, and pushing aside the dust, he drew out the long lost gold. Reginald knew it was, even before the box was opened. A moment after his eyes beheld his triumph. Mira was his. Then was the moment for action.

With a smart tap on the man's shoulder, he said:

"Mr. Shaw, awake! Here is your gold."

The somnambulist turned, gazed wildly on Reginald, who pointed to the box of gold, and repeated:

"There is your long lost gold, Mr. Shaw!"

The old man was awake, his eyes gazing eagerly on his treasure. He knew all then, and in his great joy sank, as Reginald feared, dying, on the cistern floor.

Gently raising, he bore him out and up, retracing his steps through the long halls to his own room.

After applying restoratives, Reginald was rewarded by seeing signs of consciousness appearing. A little longer, and Silas whispered:

"Is it true?"

In answer Reginald sped swiftly thence, descending again to the cellar; and in a few moments more reëntered the room, and placed beside the old man his box of gold.

"Mira is yours, and this her dowry," the old man whispered.

And Reginald, as he clasped the trembling hand to express his joy and thanks, noticed the old look of bitterness and suspicion was gone. Silas Shaw smiled, probably the first time for many long months, perhaps years, as he said:

"I wish Mira was here now."

Thus Reginald Harland won his love. And thus it was that the mystery which had so long agitated the minds of so many was discovered, and the oft-repeated query, "Who stole Shaw's gold?" was heard no more.

CASH AND CREDIT.

A LIFE SKETCH.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

George Brown, at the age of twenty-three, took him a wife,—or, rather, he and Hattie took one another—for better, or for worse. But then they knew it was going to be for *better* always, and never for worse. How could it be otherwise, when they loved so truly, and when they understood each other so well? They had married young, and they had but little of this world's goods to commence with; but they had health and strength, and they were going to work together, and build them up a home of their own in time.

"We will be very saving," said Hattie, "and in the end we may reach the goal." The goal was the home which they were to own. "We shall not scrimp, nor deny ourselves of necessary comforts; but we will do without luxuries. By thus economizing in the morning, we may find a store to spare in the evening. Money is like time: An hour gained in the early day is a great thing, while an hour lost may not be regained."

George saw and understood, and he was as eager as was his wife. He was determined to put all his energies into the work, and in the future he saw foreshadowed promises most bright. He had taken of his uncle a small house which he was to pay for when he could. He had no doubt that he should be able to pay two hundred dollars a year on it, at which rate, as his kind relative had offered the bargain, the property would be his in six years.

"George," asked Hattie, one evening, at the tea-table, "what did you pay for this tea?"

"I declare, Hattie, I don't know. I don't believe I asked."

"What!—Did not ask?"

"No. I have every confidence in Mr. Skidd. He is a perfectly honorable man."

"But did you not pay for it?"

"No. I have opened an account there."

Hattie shook her head disapprovingly. George saw the motion, and went on,—

"You know I am paid monthly, and I thought it would be just as well to keep a monthly account at the store. And Mr. Skidd himself preferred that plan."

"I can see very readily why Mr. Skidd should prefer it," said the wife, with a significant smile. "In the first place, he knows that you are an industrious, steady, and honorable man, and that whatever you may owe you will surely pay. He knows that."

George was flattered, but he felt that his wife had spoken no more than the truth.

"And," pursued Hattie, "he knows one thing more: He knows that you will buy more on credit than you would for cash."

George made a deprecatory motion, but his wife continued,—

"Mr. Skidd *knows*. He is old in the business. Over his good customers, who open monthly accounts upon his ledger, he has two decided advantages: He can persuade them to buy what they would not buy if they had to pay the cash down; and, where they are to have credit—where the trader is to have the extra labor and expense of entering and posting each separate article, and, in the end, of making a full bill of items—the buyer cannot with good conscience demand reduction from asking prices."

George smiled, and said he thought his wife was mistaken. He was sure he was doing well. It would be inconvenient to pay for each little article as he ordered it. And, furthermore, it would be handier to settle his store bills when his employers settled with him.

Hattie did not press the matter. She had brought the subject upon the tapis, and she was willing to await the development of events.

"By the way, Mr. Brown, do you not want a box of these figs? They are fresh,—I'll warrant them,—and by the box I will put them cheap." So spoke Mr. Skidd, the store-keeper.

George knew that his wife was very fond of figs; and he loved them himself. And he finally consented that a box should be sent to him.

On another day Mr. Skidd said,—

"Ah, Brown, my dear fellow, have you tried this golden syrup?"

George had not tried the syrup. The best quality of molasses had hitherto answered him. But he was persuaded to try it.

On another day—

"Look here, Brown,—shall I send you up a dozen of these Messina oranges? A new cargo just in. You won't get 'em so cheap again. Only thirty cents."

Only thirty cents! And George knew how fond Hattie was of oranges. Of course he would have them.

And so the days passed on, and the month came to an end. George Brown was paid by his employers, and he set at once about paying others. On his way home he stopped in and got Mr. Skidd's bill.

"You can take it and look it over," said the trader, with a patronising smile. "You will find it all right."

George had intended to pay the bill then and there; but when he saw the long column of figures, and glanced his eye at the sum total, his heart leaped up into his mouth. He was astounded. He had thought to himself, as he had come along, that Skidd's bill would be about twelve to fifteen dollars. After paying everything else he would have twenty dollars left, which would satisfy this last demand, and leave something over. He had just commenced housekeeping, and did not expect to save much at first.

But—mercy!—how his anticipations were knocked in pieces as he looked at this bill. He told Skidd he guessed he would look it over; and on his way homeward he examined it; but he could find nothing wrong—nothing wrong in the items,—but the sum total was a poser:—*twenty-six dollars and forty-two cents!*

For a long time after he had reached home he tried to convince Hattie that nothing was the matter with him; but at length he plucked up courage, and drew forth Skidd's bill. He had expected that his wife would be paralyzed. But, on the contrary, she only smiled, and said it was all right.

"All right?" echoed George.

"All right, so far as Mr. Skidd is concerned," said Hattie. "You remember what I told you once before. And now let's sit down and eat supper, and then we will look the matter over."

And after supper they went at the work. Hattie took the bill, and a piece of blank paper, and followed the items down with her pencil.

"First," she said, "is a box of figs, at fifteen cents a pound. It was very cheap, no doubt; but the eight pounds came to a dollar and twenty cents. Had you been required to pay cash, you would not have bought them. You would, at least, have asked me if I would like them, and I should have told you, No. Next we have a gallon of golden syrup, which we did not need, and for which you would not have paid cash without consulting me."

And so she went on, and in the end she had cut down the bill, by throwing out articles which they had not absolutely needed, to less than fifteen dollars.

A dollar here had not seemed much to George; and a dollar and a half there; and then seventy-five cents; and then only fifty cents;—but there had been twenty visits to the store during the month, and the aggregate of these trivial sums was considerable.

George saw the whole thing, and he knew that his wife had been right from the first.

"Don't say a word," he said. "I see the mistake. But I'll have to work around into the right track by degrees."

"How so, George?"

"Why,—I haven't money enough left of my month's wages to quite pay this bill; so I shall be utterly unable to enter upon the cash principle at present."

"There need be no difficulty in that direction," said Hattie. "I have not spent quite all my little capital. I had already fixed it for a bit of a nest-egg; and I don't know as it could be put to a better use than the laying of a foundation for cash payments. At any rate, George, let us try it for a while."

George kissed his wife, and said she was a blessing; and he promised that he would follow her advice in the future. He took the money which she had to give, and held it as a loan, which he was to return at the earliest possible moment;—and he felt an ambition, too, to see how speedily he could do it.

And on Monday morning the new rule of life went into operation. George paid Mr. Skidd's bill, and told him that hereafter he should pay cash for everything he bought. The storekeeper pooh-pooh'd, and said there was no need of it.

"Bless you, my boy, I had as lief trust you as not."

"I do not doubt it, Mr. Skidd; but I prefer not to be trusted. I would rather consume my own groceries than to consume yours. A bill is an evil at best, and I don't choose to have evils growing on my hands if I can help it."

Mr. Skidd saw very plainly that his customer's vision was clear, and he said no more.

On the evening of that very Monday Mr. Skidd exhibited to George some extra nice preserves, and the young man's first impulse was to order a pot of them; but the taking out of his wallet, and the breaking of a five-dollar bill, was a palpable reminder; and he concluded that he could get along without them. Said he, to himself,—

"These seemingly trivial sums, if I save them, will, at the end of the month, add up as greatly in my favor as they have heretofore added up against me."

And he found it so. And he found one thing more in his favor from cash payments which he had not particularly counted upon. As he had the money in hand to pay for the article which he had planned to purchase, he could buy it where he could get it best and cheapest. Traders are not willing to lose cash customers; and they do only the fair and honest thing when they sell to such a customer cheaper than they sell to others. Not only is the interest of the money on account an important item in the aggregate of many accounts, but the keeping of that account in day-book and ledger is an expense. George very soon learned all this; and he found that even Mr. Skidd sold to him during this month of cash payments cheaper than he had sold during the previous month.

And so the months rolled on and George Brown opened no more accounts with traders. He found that in paying cash he was constantly reminded of the value of each separate sum as he counted it out, and was hence not likely to purchase what he did not need. And then he had a goal ahead which he had determined to reach as speedily as possible; and by his system of cash payments he could estimate at the close of every day the gain he was making toward the desired end. In two months he paid what he had borrowed of his wife, and she put it into the common fund; and in five years his home was his own, and he owed no man anything but love and good-will.

◆

—A pleasant, cheerful wife is as a rainbow set in the sky when her husband's mind is tossed with storms and tempests; but a dissatisfied and fretful wife, in the hour of trouble, is like one of those fiends who are appointed to torture lost spirits.

MIRIAM'S FAITH.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

"Why hope any longer?
Why fly in God's face,
By asking for mercy,
And praying for grace?
We've been sinners, you know, Myra,
Sinners—now poor—
And 'tis but to the saints, Myra,
Bread shall be sure."

Poor Miriam looked up
From her knees on the floor.
"The children are starving, Bess,
Chide me no more.
There's no flour in the barrel,
No meal in the bin;
I *must* pray till He hears me,
No matter for sin."

"Poor, fruitless endeavor!
Sad wasting of breath!
There is nothing to hope for now,
Nothing but death!
For the skies are as brass, Myra,
God will not hear,
High *up* on His throne, Myra,
Sinners *down* here!"

"But the children are drooping, Bess,
Dying for bread;
And *they* are not sinners, Bess.
Jesus hath said,
'Let them come unto me.'
If I touch but the hem
Of His garment, He surely
Will come unto them!"

* * * * *

Hark! the loud, welcome knock
Of a friend at the door.
Hark! the brisk, welcome tread
Of a friend on the floor.
Here's bread, and in plenty;
Here's milk, and to spare;
God's messenger brought it
In answer to prayer!

◆

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. BLACK GETS A NEW IDEA.

As Neva recognized the youngest of her three guardians, as they rode up the avenue of Hawkhurst at a leisurely pace, a strange embarrassment seized upon her. The horsemen had not yet seen her in the twilight and the shadow of shrubbery, and she proposed a return to the drawing-room. Rufus Black assented, and they passed in at the open French window which gave directly upon the marble terrace.

The drawing-room was full of shadows. Artress sat in a recessed window, silent and immovable, and Lady Wynde and Craven Black were in the second portion of the triple arched apartment, completely hidden from view, and their low whispers barely penetrated to the outer room. Lady Wynde, hearing her step-daughter's return, came forth, rang for lights, and ordered the lace curtains to be dropped.

A score of wax candles were presently glowing in their polished silver sconces, and a couple of moon-like lamps dispensed a mellow radiance that penetrated to every corner of the triple room. The curtains, fluttering in the soft night breeze, shut out all insects, but admitted the perfumed air. Craven Black, satisfied that his tête-à-tête with Lady Wynde was over for the present, sauntered into the outer room to make the acquaintance of the young heiress.

He had thought of Neva as an insipid, affected, weak-headed young lady, who would be a mere puppet in his hands and those of Lady Wynde. His surprise may be imagined when he beheld a slender, spirited girl, with eyes of red gloom, brown hair tinted with the sunshine, scarlet lips, and a piquant face, full of an irresistible witchery and sauciness—a girl so bright and keen of intellect, so resolute and strong in herself, that he wondered that she could ever have been imposed upon by even his skilfully forged letter.

"Neva, my dear," said Lady Wynde, "allow me to present to you the Honorable Craven Black—one of your dear papa's friends, and consequently yours and mine."

Neva acknowledged the introduction by a bow of her haughty little head, and a smile so warm and sweet that Craven Black was captivated by it. Any friend of her late father's had a peculiar claim upon Neva's friendship, and Craven Black resolved to elaborate the small fiction, and coin agreeable little anecdotes of his relations to her father, so that the heiress would be inspired with a liking for him.

Before time had been granted for more than the usual commonplaces incident to an introduction, the three guardians of Miss Wynde were announced by the footman, and were ushered into the drawing-room.

Sir John Freise came first—a tall, stately old gentleman, with white hair and closely cropped whiskers, distinguished for his old-fashioned courtliness of bearing, and noted throughout Kent for his unswerving integrity.

Mr. Atkins, the attorney, came next, looking more than ordinarily insignificant of person, his bald head shining, his honest face flushed to redness. He was not fine looking, nor well shaped, but, like Sir John, he was a man of invincible integrity and honesty of character, and many years of service to Sir Harold Wynde had inspired him with a genuine affection for the family, and given him, as one might say, a personal interest in its prosperity.

Lastly, and because he preferred to come last, was young Lord Towyn, as handsome as any knight of chivalry, his golden hair tossed back from his noble forehead, his blue eyes glowing, and a warm smile playing about his tawny mustached lips.

Neva recognized her guardians, and welcomed them all in turn with hand-shakings and quiet greetings. Lady Wynde introduced the Blacks, father and son, to the new-comers.

"This is scarcely a business visit, Miss Neva," said Sir John Freise, leading his young hostess to a sofa with old-fashioned gallantry. "Lord Towyn and Mr. Atkins have been closeted with me to-day, discussing your affairs in the way of rents and leases, but it is our business to spare you these details, and it is your province to enjoy the fruits of our labors," and he smiled paternally upon her. "We are come to welcome you back to the home of your fathers, and to express the hope that you will fill worthily the place your father has resigned to you."

"I will try to walk in papa's steps," returned Neva, lowly and gravely.

"Lady Freise and my girls will call upon you to-morrow," said Sir John. "They sent their love to you, and would have come to-day, but that I begged them to allow you a day to rest in after your journey. You will be inundated with visitors, Miss Neva. The lady of Hawkhurst will not be permitted to hide her light under a bushel! Lady Freise has already projected no end of fêtes, balls and dinners in your honor, and she has persuaded our young friend Lord Towyn to spend a month with us, so that you will not lack an escort, should you desire one."

"You are very thoughtful, Sir John," said Lady Wynde, with a curl of the lip. "Miss Wynde, however, can never lack for an escort. I fancied, when I saw you three gentlemen enter in such formidable array, that some horrid red-tape business was about to be transacted. I did not know indeed but that you had come with some official suggestions as to the management of the household, or to discuss the matter of pin-money."

"All that is settled by Sir Harold's will," said Mr. Atkins quietly. "The Baronet was very explicit in his directions, and assigned to Miss Wynde an extraordinarily liberal allowance until she comes of age, when of course she comes into full possession of her magnificent revenues. Your residence at Hawkhurst was also provided for, Lady Wynde, with a very handsome allowance in recognition of your services to Miss Wynde as friend and chaperon."

"And are we compelled to remain at Hawkhurst, whether we will or no?" demanded the Baronet's widow.

"Certainly not," replied Atkins. "You and Miss Wynde are free to reside where you please, but it is natural to suppose you will prefer for a stated residence the seat of the family grandeur."

Lady Wynde made no reply, but her glittering eyes became speculative.

The visitors, while courteous to her ladyship, bestowed the larger share of their attention upon the young heiress to whom their visit was directed. They had intended to make but a brief call, but the time flew by as if on wings. Neva talked with them with cheerful gayety or gravity, as the subject rendered befitting, and at Sir John's request played and sang for him. Lord Towyn leaned over the piano, turning the music leaves, a rapt expression on his face, and there was not one present, save Neva, who failed to see that he was already the lover of the beautiful young heiress.

Rufus Black recognized the fact with an actual jealousy. He said to himself with a furious bitterness that his happiness and Lally's had been ruined for the sake of Neva Wynde, and he would not be cheated of fortune and bride by the young Earl.

Craven Black sat apart, his forehead shaded by his hand, his light eyes fairly devouring the glowing loveliness of Neva's face. He was a world-worn, blasé, dissolute man, incapable of honor and fidelity, even to the woman who had sinned and perilled so much for him. As he sat there, he contrasted Neva's spirited and dainty beauty with the maturer and lesser charms of Lady Wynde, and strange thoughts and hopes awoke to life within his breast.

"My fate is not so settled as to be irrevocable," he thought within himself. "I wish I had seen the girl before I forged that letter. Why should I throw myself away upon four thousand a year and a woman of the world, when, by skillful manœuvring, I might gain seventy thousand per annum and a bride like an houri? I will study my chances. If there is a chance for me with Neva, I will run the race with these others and win the prize."

And so, all unknown and unsuspected by Neva, she had three aspirants to her hand among those who listened to her music.

And of these three lovers, one only was pure and true and altogether worthy of her love. Only one loved her without a shadow of greed, and that one was the young Lord Towyn.

But which, should she choose among these three, would she prefer? To whose fate, of these three, would she link her own? Would a regard for the supposed wishes of her dead father outweigh the desires of her own heart? These were problems which time alone could solve.

After the music, Lady Wynde rang for coffee, which was brought in and dispensed to the guests. Sir John Freise, waxing eloquent upon the degeneracy of modern society, held Lady Wynde captive. Rufus Black wandered down the length of the drawing-rooms, looking with an artist's eye at the glorious pictures upon the walls. Mr. Atkins and Craven Black engaged in conversation, and Artress sat apart, silent and observing, as usual.

Lord Towyn and Neva also looked at the pictures and talked of their childhood days, growing animated over their pleasant reminiscences. The young Earl gradually drew his hostess into the great conservatory, a huge glass dome at the bottom of the drawing-room. Here the air was heavy with fragrance. Stalks of white lilies sprang from the side-walls, bearing pistils of red and dancing light. Aisles of tropical shrubbery, thick with golden fruitage or snowy blossoms, or both at once, stretched on either side. A feathery palm reared its plumed head in the very centre of the dome. Vines trailed and festooned themselves from floor to roof, dropping perfume from fiery chalices. And through the light foliage of a well-trimmed jungle of flowers and leaves, gleamed a great mellow moon of light, reminding one of a Brazilian forest on a moonlit summer night.

"Do you remember when we were here last, Neva?" asked Lord Towyn, as they paused beside the marble basin of a great fountain, and Neva idly dropped rose petals upon the crystal waters. "We were standing upon this very spot, with only that marble Naiad to hear us, and you and I were but children when we entered upon our childish betrothal. How long ago that seems! Do you remember it, Neva?"

The rose petals in the girl's white fingers were not brighter than her cheeks.

"Yes, I remember," she said, drooping her head over the bright waters. "What precocious children we were, Lord Towyn."

The young Earl sighed.

"The utterance of my title shows the great gulf between the now and the then," he said. "I was no lord in those days, and you called me Arthur. Now when your name comes instinctively to my lips, I must remember that you are no longer Neva, but Miss Wynde. Why will you not call me by the old name, and let us take up our old friendship where we left off, instead of beginning anew as strangers?"

"I am willing," said Neva frankly, yet shyly. "I—I look upon you as a brother, Arthur, and you may call me Neva."

Strange to say, the permission thus granted did not seem to delight Lord Towyn. His warm blue eyes clouded over with a singular discontent, and a pained expression gathered about his mouth.

"I don't want to be considered as your brother, Neva," he declared, after a minute's struggle with himself. "I would prefer to begin again as your merest acquaintance. A fraternal relation toward you would be insupportable. For years I have dreamed and hoped that I might some time win your love. I am no longer a boy, Neva, and I love you with a man's love. I have carried your picture for years next my heart. I have worshipped you in secret ever since our childhood. I do not know how I have been betrayed into this confession, Neva," he added. "I did not intend to be so premature. I do not yet ask you to love or to marry me, but I do ask you to allow me to become your suitor."

Neva's heart thrilled under this ardent and impassioned declaration as under an angel's touch. Then a leaden pall seemed to descend upon her soul, and her face grew white, as she faltered:

"It cannot be, Arthur."

Lord Towyn shivered with sudden pain.

"You—you are not promised to another, Neva?"

"N-no!"

"You love another then?"

"Oh, no, no!"

"It is that I have startled you by my premature confession, Neva?" he cried tremulously. "Dolt that I am! I have thought and dreamed of you so much, that I had forgotten how perfect a stranger I must seem to you after all these years of separation. You cannot take up the old life where we dropped it. I was foolish to have expected it. Do not let my undue haste prejudice you against me. It will not, Neva?"

"No, Arthur," answered the girl lowly and hesitatingly.

"And you will give me a chance to retrieve my error?" he demanded eagerly. "Perhaps in time you may grow to love me, Neva—"

"Arthur," said the young girl, nerving herself to tell him of her father's supposed last wishes, "I have something to say to you. Papa—"

Her voice died out in a half sob.

"Well, darling?" said the young Earl, bending nearer to her, his eyes burning with the love that filled his being. "What of Sir Harold? Did you fancy that he would not have approved of our love?"

Neva nodded a dumb assent.

"And if Sir Harold had approved, do you think you could learn to love me?" whispered the young Earl softly, his eager breath fanning the girl's cheek.

Neva's silence was interpreted as a favorable answer.

"Before my father died," said Lord Towyn gently, "he told me that it had long been his wish and that of Sir Harold to unite the two families in our marriage. Sir Harold was in India at the time of my father's death, and was not likely, at that distance from home, to have contracted an aversion to me, or to have formed other plans for your future. You see I am right, Neva, and now I claim to be considered as your suitor. May it not be?"

"Oh, Arthur," the girl murmured, sorely perplexed, "I—"

The story trembled on her lips, but she did not give utterance to it, for at that critical moment Rufus Black entered the conservatory, and came up the flower-bordered aisle, with an unmistakable displeasure upon his melancholy face.

Neva started guiltily at his approach, as if she had been wronging him or her dead father in listening to Lord Towyn's avowals of love. But although she moved away from the young Earl, she paused under a tropical rose-tree, and began to gather roses, and her two suitors hovered about her, each recognizing in the other a rival.

They were presently joined by Neva's third lover, Craven Black. The last-named looked moodily and jealously at his son and the young Earl, and devoted himself so closely to the heiress that, with a feeling of annoyance, Neva presently proposed a return to the drawing-room.

A glance of jealous anger from the eyes of Lady Wynde greeted Craven Black as he re-entered the presence of his betrothed. The Baronet's widow began to entertain a suspicion of the disaffection of her lover.

Sir John Freise was the first to propose a departure, and the horses were ordered, and he, with Mr. Atkins and Lord Towyn, took their leave.

Craven Black exchanged a few whispered words with Lady Wynde, appointing an interview for the next morning, and then also departed with his son.

They were to walk to Wyndham, and not a word was spoken by either as they strode down the wide avenue, and passed out at the lodge gates. Once out upon the highway, Craven Black broke the silence, saying:

"Well, Rufus, how do you like Miss Wynde?"

"She is beautiful—lovely beyond comparison," answered Rufus enthusiastically. "I never saw a being so witching, so bright, so sweet!"

"You talk like a lover," sneered Craven Black. "One would not believe that you had been lying drunk all day at a low inn through love for another woman."

"You will drive me mad!" ejaculated Rufus, his voice choking suddenly. "How dare you taunt me with my misery and degradation? I did love Lally—I do love her, God knows. But you have separated us. She despises me, and I am thrown upon myself. Why grudge me the little comfort Miss Wynde's presence and smiles give me? If I had never met Lally, I should have idolized Miss Wynde. And as Lally can never be mine again—my poor wronged girl—and I shall go to perdition unless some hand pulls me back, I turn to Miss Wynde as a drowning man might turn to any frail support and cling to it. I—I like her. I could almost say I love her."

"Enviable elasticity of youthful affections!" sighed Craven Black, still sneeringly, and speaking in a stilted voice. "You remind me of a child, Rufus, whose doll is smashed to-day, but who is equally content with a new one to-morrow. You remind me also of the old maid's prayer. She wanted one man and another, but as the years went on and she grew old, she ceased to pray for the affections of any man in particular, but cried out, 'Any, O Lord, *any!*' And so, I judge, one woman is to you the same as another. It is 'Lalla Rookh' one day, and Miss Wynde the next. 'Extremes meet.'"

Rufus grew terribly angry.

"You talk as if you were dissatisfied with me for obeying your own orders to make myself agreeable to Miss Wynde," he ejaculated. "Do you want her now for yourself?"

Mr. Black hastened to disclaim any such desire.

"As to me," said Rufus, with unwonted decision, "I will not be much longer dependent upon you. I will win Miss Wynde and her fortune, or I'll blow my brains out. Lally is lost to me, but all is not lost, as I thought this morning. I like Miss Wynde. I even love her already, strange as it may seem, but I do not and cannot love her as I love poor Lally. But I shall marry her and make her happy. I am desperate, but by no means helpless and hopeless."

Mr. Black maintained a dogged silence during the remainder of the walk. He bade his son good-night coldly upon the inn stairs, and locked himself in his own rooms, muttering:

"The girl has three lovers, for my fickle son really loves her. I must watch my chances, and not loosen my hold upon Octavia until I have made sure of Neva. In default of the greater prize, I must not lose the lesser. It requires some skill to sit upon two stools and not fall between them. I wish I could have foreseen the turn affairs would take, and had inserted my name in that forged letter in place of my son's name. I shall have to be pretty keen to do away with the effect of that letter. I would give all I own in the world at present to know which of her three lovers will win the heiress of Hawkhurst."

CHAPTER XVI.

RUFUS ASKS THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Craven Black and his son met at their late breakfast in the private parlor of the former. The father was himself again, cold, polite, and cynical. The son was sullen and irritable, at war with himself and all mankind. His grief for the loss of his young wife had lost none of its poignancy, although he had avowed himself the suitor of another. His thoughts during the night just passed had been all of Lally, and not of Neva. In his dreams, at least, he was still true to the loving heart he had broken.

The pair were sipping their coffee when a waiter brought in Mr. Black's morning paper, just arrived from London. Craven Black unfolded the sheet and scanned its contents lazily.

"Any news?" inquired Rufus.

"Nothing particular. It's all about a war in prospect between Prussia and France. I never read politics, so I'll skip the French letter and alarming head lines. I prefer to read the smaller items. Ah, what is this?"

Craven Black started and changed color as his eye rested upon a familiar name in an obscure paragraph, under a startling title. His agitation increased as he glanced over the paragraph, taking in its meaning.

"What's the matter?" demanded Rufus. "Any of your acquaintance dead? Any one left you a fortune?"

"It is terrible," said Craven Black, shuddering, and regarding the paper with horrified eyes. "How could she have been so utterly foolish and insane? It was not I who killed her."

"Killed whom? Then some one is dead?"

"Poor girl!" muttered Craven Black, still staring at the paper with wide eyes, as if he read there an accusation of wilful murder. "Poor Lally—"

"*Who?*"

Rufus leaped to his feet with a shriek on his lips, bounded to his father's side, and snatched the paper in his trembling hands.

"I—I see nothing," he cried. "You shocked me cruelly. I—I thought that Lally— Oh, my God!"

He stood as if suddenly frozen, staring as his father had done at an item in a lower corner of the paper—an item which bore the title: "Distressing Case of Suicide. Another unfortunate gone to her death!"

From the midst of this paragraph the name of Lalla Bird stood out with startling distinctness.

Unconsciously to himself, Rufus Black read the brief paragraph aloud in a hoarse, strained, breathless sort of voice, and his father listened with head bent forward, and a horrified look graven on his face as upon stone.

"Last evening," the notice read, "as officer Rice was pursuing his usual beat, a young woman dashed past him, bonnetless, her hair flying, and ran out upon Waterloo Bridge. She was muttering wildly to herself, and her aspect was that of one beside herself. The officer, comprehending her purpose, rushed after her, but he was too late to arrest her in her dread purpose. She looked back at him, sprang up to the parapet like a flash, and with a last cry upon her lips—a name the officer could not make out—she precipitated herself into the river. In falling, her head struck a passing boat, mutilating her features beyond all semblance of humanity. She was dead when taken from the water, and will have a pauper's burial unless some one comes forward to claim her remains. No token of her identity was found upon her person, but her handkerchief, floating on the water and picked up immediately by a boatman, bore the name of Lalla Bird. The girl, for she was very young, was pretty, and without doubt belonged to that frail class which more than any other furnishes us suicides."

Rufus Black read this paragraph to the very end, and then the paper fell from his nerveless hands.

"Dead!" he said hollowly. "Dead!"

"Dead!" echoed his father hoarsely.

"*Dead!*" said Rufus Black, turning his burning, terrible eyes upon his father's face. "And it was you who killed her! I loved her—I would have been true to her all her days, but you tore us asunder, and drove her to despair, madness and death. You are her murderer!"

Craven Black started nervously, and looked around him.

"Don't, Rufus—don't," he ejaculated uneasily. "Some one might hear you. The girl is to blame for killing herself, and no one else can be held accountable for it. I offered her money, but she would not take it. It was the landlady who drove her to the—the rash act. The old woman listened at the door, and suddenly burst in upon us and called the girl some foul name and ordered her out of her house. The girl fled as if pursued by demons. I thought then she meant to kill herself—just as she has done!"

A groan burst from Rufus Black's lips.

"My poor, poor wife!" he moaned. "She *was* my wife, and she shall not lie in a pauper's grave. I am going up to London—"

"To make a fool of yourself," interrupted Craven Black, recovering from his shock. "And to-morrow morning the papers will all come out with the romantic story that this girl was your wife, and the story will stick to you all your days. People will say that you drove her to her death. Your chance of becoming master of Hawkhurst will end on the spot. You will be cast out and abhorred. Others as pretty and as good as this girl have been buried at the public expense. Leave her alone."

"I cannot—"

"Suppose you go then? What will you say to the coroner, or police justice? What excuse will you have for abandoning your wife, as you persist in calling the girl? Shall you confess your perjury? Can you stand the cross-questioning, the badgering, the prying into your life and motives?"

Rufus shrank within himself in a sort of terror. The besetting weakness and cowardice of his nature now paralyzed him.

"I cannot go," he muttered. "Oh, Lally, my lost, wronged wife!"

He dashed from the room, and entered his own, locking his door, and was not visible again that day.

Craven Black attired himself in morning costume and walked over to Hawkhurst. Neva was in the park, and he had a long private interview with Lady Wynde. In returning to his inn, he crossed the park, ostensibly to cut short his walk, but really to exchange a few words with the heiress.

He found her in one of the wide shaded paths, but she was not alone. Lord Towyn, on his way to the house, had just encountered her, and they were talking to each other, in utter forgetfulness of any supposed obstacles to their mutual love. Craven Black accosted them, and lingered a few moments, and then pursued his way homeward, while the young couple slowly proceeded toward the house.

Craven Black called at Hawkhurst the next day, and the next, but alone, Rufus remaining obstinately sequestered in his darkened chamber. Neva was busy with visitors, Lady Freise and her daughters, and other friends and neighbors, hastening to call upon the returned heiress. Lord Towyn found excuses to call nearly every day. He was devoting all his energies to the task of wooing and winning Neva, and he pushed his suit with an ardor that brought a cynical smile to Craven Black's lips continually.

There were fêtes given at Freise Hall in Neva's honor; breakfast and lawn parties at other houses; and the young girl found herself in a whirl of gayety in strong contrast with her late life of seclusion.

During the week that followed the publication of the announcement of Lally Bird's suicide, Rufus Black did not cross his threshold. He meditated suicide, and wept and bemoaned his lost darling with genuine anguish. During this week, Craven Black made various overtures to Miss Wynde, uttered graceful compliments to her when Lady Wynde was not within hearing, and threw a lover-like ardor into his tones and countenance when addressing her. But he could not see that he was regarded by her with any favor, and grew anxious that his son should again enter the lists, and win her from Lord Towyn, who seemed to be having the field nearly to himself.

After an energetic talk with his son, Craven Black persuaded Rufus to emerge from his retirement and to again visit Hawkhurst. There is a refining influence about grief, and Rufus had never looked so well as when, habited in black, his face pale, thin, and sharp-featured, his eyes full of melancholy and vain regret, he again called upon Neva. The impression he had made upon her upon the occasion of his first visit had been favorable, and it became still more favorable upon this second visit. Neva received the impression, from his steady melancholy and the occasional wildness of his eyes, that he was a genius, and became deeply interested in him.

Add to this interest the influence of the forged letter, which she devoutly believed to have been written by her father now dead, and one will see that even Lord Towyn had in the boy artist a dangerous rival.

Lady Wynde steadily pursued her preparations for her marriage, keeping a keen watch upon her lover, whom she more than suspected of faithlessness to her. She loved him with all her wicked soul, and was anxious to secure him in matrimonial chains, but her engagement to him had not yet been announced, and even Neva did not know of it.

By the exercise of Lady Wynde's influence, the Blacks, father and son, were invited to all the parties given in Neva's honor, and Rufus Black and Lord Towyn were ever at the side of the young heiress. Lady Wynde hinted judiciously to a few of her chosen friends that Neva and young Black were informally betrothed, but that the betrothal was still a secret.

As the summer passed and September came, bringing near at hand the time appointed for the marriage of Lady Wynde and Craven Black, both the Blacks, father and son, became uneasy and restless. The former was anxious to try his fate with Neva before committing himself beyond retrieval with her step-mother. Rufus had learned to love the heiress with a genuine love, not as he had loved Lally, but still with so much of fervor that he believed he could not live without her. His grief for his young wife had not lessened, but time had robbed the blow of its sharpest sting, and he thought of Lally in heaven, while he coveted Neva on earth. He grew anxious to put his faith to the test.

A favorable opportunity was afforded him.

Neva was fond of walking, and frequently took long walks, despite the fact that she had carriages and horses at command. One mild September evening, after her seven o'clock dinner, she walked over to Wyndham village to purchase at the general dealer's some Berlin wool urgently required for the completion of a sofa pillow, or some such trifle, and sauntered slowly homeward in the gloaming.

Rufus Black, who was idly wandering in the streets at the time, hurried after her and offered his escort, and took charge of her parcel. They walked on together.

As they emerged from the village into the open country, Rufus felt that the hour had come in which to learn his fate from Neva's lips. He revolved in his mind a dozen ways of putting the momentous question, but the manner still remained undecided when Neva sat down to rest upon a way-side bank in the very shadow of Hawkhurst park.

This bank was her favorite halting-place when going on foot to or from Wyndham. It was shaded by a giant oak, and clothed in the softest and greenest turf. Here the earliest primroses blossomed and heart's-ease starred the ground. Near the bank a small private gate opened into the park. Rufus decided in his own mind that this was the spot, and this soft, deepening twilight the hour for the avowal of his love.

There was no one within the park within view to interrupt him; no one coming along the road. With a slight sense of nervousness, he even surveyed a way-side thicket that flanked the bank upon one side, as if fearing some way-side tramp might be lurking there within hearing, but he saw nothing to discountenance his projects.

"It's a lovely evening," said Neva softly, looking up at the shadowing sky and around her at the shadowed earth. "The air is full of balm!"

"Yes, it is lovely," said Rufus, fixing his gaze upon the young girl, as if he meant his remark to apply to her face. "How the time has sped since I first saw you, Miss Neva. Life was very dark to me in those July days, but you have given it a glow and brightness I did not dream that it could ever possess. It seems to me that I never existed until—until I knew you. You cannot fail to know that I love you. I have often thought that you have purposely encouraged my suit. But be that as it may, I love you more than all the world, Miss Neva. Will you be my wife?"

He waited in a breathless suspense for her reply.

Neva's face did not flush with joy, as it might have done had the speaker been Lord Towyn. She looked very grave, and into her eyes of red gloom came a sadness that was terrible to see.

"I like you, Rufus," she said gently, looking beyond him with a strange, far-seeing gaze. "I believe you to be good and honorable—would to God I did not—for then—then—Rufus, I do not know what to say to you. What shall I answer you?"

"Say Yes," pleaded Rufus, with the energy of a gathering terror. "Do not refuse me, Neva, I implore you. I am not handsome and titled like Lord Towyn; I am plain and awkward, but I love you with all my soul. I place my fate in your hands. I have it in me to become great and good, and if you will be my wife I will be noble for your sake. But if you cast me off, I shall perish. In you are centred all my hopes. Oh, Neva, I beseech you to be merciful to me, and to save me from the utter misery of a life without you. I cannot—cannot live if you cast me off!"

He spoke with an earnestness that went to Neva's soul. She trembled, as if the burden of responsibility laid upon her were too heavy to be borne. In her uplifted eyes was a wild, beseeching look, as if she called upon her father from his home in heaven to aid her now.

"Remember," said Rufus desperately, "you are deciding upon my life or death—moral and physical!"

Neva read in the declaration an awful sincerity that made her shudder.

"I must think," she faltered. "I cannot decide so suddenly. Give me a week, Rufus—only a week in which to decide. Oh," she added, under her breath, with a passionate emphasis, "if papa only knew! He would have spared me this."

Rufus assented to the delay with a beaming face. If she had intended to refuse him, he thought, she would have done so on the spot. But she had not refused him, and there was hope. She should be his wife, and he would be master of Hawkhurst yet.

In the midst of his self-gratulations, Neva arose and walked slowly onward, grave and sorrowful. Rufus walked beside her with a joyous tread.

When they had passed on into the thickening shadows, and the primrose bank had been left far behind, a ragged, childish figure stirred itself from the further shadow of the thicket, and a childish face, wan and thin and haggard, with a woman's woe in the great dark eyes, looked after the young pair with an awful horror and despair.

That face belonged to the disowned young wife whom Rufus mourned as dead! The wild and woful eyes were the eyes of Lally Bird!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

◆

TIMELY WIT.

Seeing the name of Nass-red-dyn, the Turkish Æsop, reminds me of a story which I either heard or read of him in my school-days.

In his old-age near and dear friends of Nass-red-dyn were apprehended by the conquering Tamerlane, and the old man had the temerity to make an appeal through an underling for their relief. The fierce chieftain, who had conquered twenty crowns, received the message, and demanded that the Turkish scribbler should be brought before him.

Nass-red-dyn trembled in alarm, but having heard that Tamerlane was excessively fond of fruit, thought to propitiate him thereby. In his garden were beautiful quinces, and beautiful figs, both ripe; and the fancy struck him that he would consult his wife.

"Shall I carry to the terrible chieftain figs or quinces?" he asked her.

"Quinces will please him best, because they are larger and finer, and more fragrant," replied the wife.

And then the perverse old fellow, remembering one of his own fables, muttered,—

"It is never safe to follow the advice of a woman in such mighty matters. I am determined to take figs."

When he had arrived at the Barbarian's camp, and had delivered the fruit, Tamerlane amused himself by throwing the figs at his bald head. At every blow Nass-red-dyn devoutly exclaimed,—"God be praised!"

Tamerlane, in surprise, asked him what he meant.

"I am thanking God that I did not follow my wife's advice," replied Nass-red-dyn; "for she advised quinces, and had I brought them instead of figs, I should certainly have had a broken head by this time."

The merriment thus afforded to the conqueror led to the release of the old man's friends.

S. C., JR.

◆

HONEY-MOON.—It was the custom of the higher orders of Teutones, an ancient people who inhabited the northern parts of Germany, to drink mead or metheglin, a beverage made with honey, for thirty days after every wedding. From this custom comes the expression, "to spend the honey-moon." Attila, King of Hungary, drank so freely of this liquor on his wedding-day, that he was found suffocated at night, and with him expired the empire of the Huns.

◆

—During an examination of a negro in the Catechism, he was asked by the clergyman what he was made of. "Of mud, massa," was the reply. On being told he should say, "Of dust," he answered, "No, massa, it no do, no tick togedder."

GREEN TYPES AND SHADOWS.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Within the world of His third day's work,
By a mighty hand written wise and good,
I find fair types of our human lives
In the humble heath, by the lonely wood,
Until Fancy gives me a kingdom new
In the summer life of the leaves astir,
From the airy seat of the thistle-down,
To the feathered crest of the forest fir.

The Army? Over the Autumn hills
Are the serried ranks of the girded corn;
Yon sentry palm, with uplifted plume,
Salutes the King of the coming morn;
Here, over sierras' desert wastes,
The cruel spears of the cactus rise;
There, fleur-de-lis by the brooklet waits,
With a banner blue as the Summer skies.

The Navy? See you yon flowery fleet,
With keel and deck made of petalled snow,
With anchored rafts by the current stirred,
Polished green above, fibre-barred below;
See the slender spars of the bullrush sway,
Dipping grave and slow to the passing oar,
And the sea-weed tatter its tinted chart
On the ragged rocks of the tide-swept shore.

The Church? Look up! In the Gothic arch
Of cathedral elms are her temples fair;
Look down, where the cardinalis prays
In his scarlet robe by the brooklet there.
The vine wreaths ever her magic rite,
Its mystic blood in her chalice lies;
While dim in the monkish aisles of old,
The forms of the vestal lilies rise.

The Doctors? Over the burning brow,
And athwart the lids of the sleepless eyes,
The cool soft fringe of the poppy's robe
Droops low, and there like a blessing lies.
Under cinchona's enforced rebuke
The icy blood courses warm again,
And the balm of Gilead holds its cup
To the fevered lip, or the couch of pain.

The Lawyers? Ah, noisy poplars they,
With a silver side under every leaf,
Or papyrus rolled by the yellow Nile,
For a stylus fit, or modern "brief."
The Preachers? Listen! the green grass tells
Of the short to-day to its blooming given,
While the harvest white to the sickle speaks
Of the waiting field to be reaped for heaven.

Poets? The cadence of soughing pines;
Painters? The flush of the maple-tree;
Singers? The fragrant praise of the flowers,
Voices to which we have yet no key.
And thus I find fancy-tinted types
In the throbbing life of the leaves astir,
From the cradled blossom beneath the bough,
To the nodding plume of the mountain fir.

MARRIED IN LEAP-YEAR.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"Five and fifty years," said Squire Dockworthy meditatively, shaking the ashes out of his pipe, "five *and* fifty years. A man an't likely to be married, I guess, when he's lived satisfied with a single lot all these years."

"Stranger things have been known to happen, Uncle Dockworthy," said Ferdinand Apperley, who was a graceless college boy of nineteen or thereabouts.

"Not in these here parts, I guess," opined the Squire.

"Well, but, Uncle, things are so different from what they used to be," persisted Ferdinand. "You see, there never has been a period before, when Women's Rights were in the ascendant as they are now."

"I don't see as that affects my particular case," said Squire Dockworthy. "I an't a woman."

"Ah, but you don't comprehend the imminence of the danger," said Ferdinand solemnly.

"Eh?" said the Squire.

"With Miss Arimathea Jenkyns living next door, and leap-year at that," added young Apperley, mischievously enjoying his relative's growing consternation.

"But you don't s'pose—"

"I suppose nothing," interrupted Ferdinand. "I only put the case problematically, just to convince you, sir, that you can't be too careful."

"O pshaw!" said the Squire, uneasily drawing a huge yellow silk pocket handkerchief across his brow, "you can't scare *me* with your college nonsense, Ferdy. A man can't be married without sayin' 'I will,' no more'n a woman."

But when he went to the village that afternoon, Ferdinand noticed that he took the way down Hollow Dam, a good eighth of a mile out of his way, sooner than pass the casements of Miss Arimathea Jenkyns' one story residence, next to his own, on the high road.

"I've made some impression on him, at all events," said Ferdy to himself, with a sparkle of merry *diablerie* in his eyes.

The Squire was sitting in the fire-light that evening, enjoying the season between daylight and dusk, technically known as "blind man's holiday," when there sounded a soft tap on the panels of the door.

"Come in," said the Squire; and a tall form entered, clad in sober black, with a bonnet of rusty bombazine trimmed with a huge jet buckle.

"Good-evenin' t'ye, Miss Arimathea," said the Squire a little tremulously, as he recognized the bonnet and garb of his spinster neighbor. "That there colt o' mine been breaking through your pickets agin? I declare to gracious I've a great mind to sell him!"

"'Tisn't that, Squire, thank you kindly," was the answer.

"Set down, set down!" said Mr. Dockworthy. "Bless me, what a cold you've got—you're as hoarse as a crow!"

"Ahem!" said Miss Arimathea. "This weather is trying to weak lungs; but I called on business, Squire."

"I knew it was the colt," said the Squire, despairingly.

"But it an't the colt," said Miss Jenkyns. "It's myself, Squire."

"Oh!" said the gentleman.

"I have concluded," went on his visitant, "to take advantage of the rights accorded to our sex by the year, and—and—in short, Squire—"

Mr. Dockworthy moved his chair a little back, but Miss Arimathea anticipated the movement by sinking theatrically on one knee before him.

"Joshua, will you be mine?" she murmured, with what might have been either a sob, or a hysteric laugh.

"I—I'd rather not," said the Squire, hitching his chair back a little further still.

"Joshua! would you break my heart?"

"I guess 'tan't so brittle as all that," said the Squire uneasily.

"I love you, Joshua Dockworthy—I have loved you these ten years," stammered the lady, still on her knees. "Say—oh, say you will be all my own! I'm a good cook, Joshua—I'm a master hand with men's shirts, and everybody knows that a place an't a place without a woman to slick it up."

"I know," said the Squire, "but—"

Miss Arimathea rose to her feet and flung her arms about the Squire's neck.

"Joshua! Joshua! you *will* say Yes!"

There was a rattling at the door-latch of the room beyond. The Squire grew scarlet as the possibility of Ferdinand Apperley breaking in upon this unexpected *tête-à-tête* occurred to his mind.

"Take your arms away," said the Squire nervously. "Please. There's a dear girl!"

"Not until you speak the word that is to seal my future bliss," persisted Miss Jenkyns, letting the rusty bonnet droop on his shoulder.

"Quick!" gasped our hero; "there's some one coming."

"Say Yes, then, dearest Joshua."

The footsteps drew nearer. They paused almost at the door.

"Yes!" gasped the Squire, breaking into a clammy perspiration all over—"yes, *yes*. Only go."

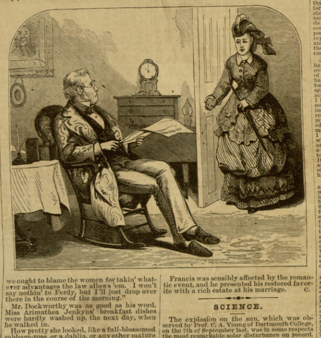
Miss Arimathea Jenkyns only paused for a parting pressure of her lips to her ancient lover's brow, and hurried away with subdued rustling of sombre draperies; while on the other side of the door, the threatening sound of footsteps passed by without any one entering.

"Thank goodness for that!" said Mr. Dockworthy to himself. "If that young rascal Ferdy *had* happened in just then— But what, *what* have I done? Engaged myself to marry that old maid! *I*, at five and fifty years of age! I'd better go into a lunatic asylum at once. What will Ferdinand say? I wonder if I couldn't go to China or California or Japan, or some of those far-away places! Or, perhaps, it might be better to swear her over to keep the peace, or—"

And Squire Dockworthy smote his two hands despairingly on the bald spot on the top of his head, as he reflected on the futility of any remedy short of matrimony for this ailment of leap-year.

Yet, as he mused on past, present and future, he could not help thinking that many a man had found a worse help-meet after all than Miss Arimathea Jenkyns. She was not young to be sure, but then neither was he. She was fair, fresh and pretty; she was very handy at a wedding or a funeral; she comprehended perfectly the exigencies of the needle; and she was just the element that he needed to brighten up the solitary old farm-house.

"It an't a bad idea," said the Squire to himself; "but I most wish she hadn't been the one to propose it. Very likely I'd ha' thought of it myself, if she'd gin me time. However, leap-year *is* leap-year, and I don't suppose we ought to blame the women for takin' whatever advantages the law allows 'em. I won't say nothin' to Ferdy, but I'll just drop over there in the course of the morning."



Mr. Dockworthy was as good as his word. Miss Arimathea Jenkyns' breakfast dishes were hardly washed up, the next day, when he walked in.

How pretty she looked, like a full-blossomed cabbage-rose, or a dahlia, or any other mature bloom, in the neat black gingham gown and white bib-apron she wore, standing in front of the kitchen sink. Not a gray hair in her abundant brown tresses—not a crow's-foot at the corner of her eyes.

"Well, Arimathea," said the Squire, a little sheepishly.

"Well, Squire," said Miss Jenkyns, with nonchalance, as she wrung out her dishcloth and hung it on a nail at the corner of the dresser.

"I've come to talk that there little matter over with you."

"What little matter?"

"Why, about our being married."

Miss Jenkyns paused, with the bib-apron half untied, and stared at the Squire with wondering blue eyes.

"My sakes alive!" she ejaculated, "who's talking about being married? Nobody has asked me yet, and if they did, I'm not by any means certain that I should say Yes."

"But they've asked me," said the Squire beamingly.

"Who has?"

"Why, *you*—haven't you?"

"Joshua Dockworthy, are you crazy?" demanded Miss Jenkyns with dignity; "*I* asked *you*?"

"Yes; last night. Don't you remember?"

"Last night! Why, widow Percy took tea here, and spent the evening, and I never went across my own threshold. And if I had, it isn't likely that I should go philandering over to your house to ask you to marry me, I guess!"

"Well, then," said the Squire, "look here. It's a trick of that rascal Ferdinand—one of his college games."

"*That's* probable enough," said Miss Jenkyns, who looked prettier than ever, with reddened cheeks and shining eyes.

The Squire's countenance fell; he was more disappointed than he cared to own.

"Look here, Arimathea," said he. "Don't you s'pose—"

"Yes," said Miss Jenkyns, laughing and coloring, "I *do* suppose—that is, if you wished it *very* much."

"Well, I do," said the Squire. "And I'll tell you what—we'll be even with Ferdinand Apperley yet."

And when the young collegian heard that his chances of an inheritance from his rich bachelor uncle were to be diminished by the marriage of that elderly relative, he stared in dismay.

"You are really going to be married, uncle?" gasped he.

"Really and truly."

"And what on earth has put it into your head?"

"Leap-year, I think," said the Squire, with a sober twinkle in his eyes, which revealed to Ferdinand that his uncle had detected his trick.

THE DUMB LOVER.

The following I find in my Scrap-book, copied from a French letter of long ago:

At the time that Francis I. of France was taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia, one of his officers, the valorous Chevalier Beauregard, smitten by the charms of an Italian lady, of noble family, named Aurelia, declared to her his passion. Aurelia, though flattered by the declaration of the gallant soldier, refused his suit on the ground of the levity of the French character, and the natural indiscretion of that people. But Beauregard was not to be put off so easily. The depth and the fervor of his love led him to propose to the lady to put his constancy to any proof she might think proper. Aurelia at length accepted the terms of the proposition, and engaged to marry him if, for the space of six months, he would remain utterly and entirely dumb.

The Chevalier promised, and then, with a silent bow, withdrew from the lady's presence; and from that moment he opened not his lips with the sound of human speech. He returned to Paris, where his friends and relatives were stricken with sorrow at the terrible infirmity which had fallen upon him,—for his had been a voice musical and entertaining. Beauregard expressed all his wants by signs, and seldom smiled. The best physicians were sent for, but he refused to see them.

The captive King was at length set free, and restored to his people; but his joy on his return to his capital was diminished by the sad misfortune which had befallen the Chevalier, who had been the monarch's chief favorite. Francis sent his best doctors to the stricken soldier, who, out of respect for his royal master, took the medicines prescribed, but with no effect. The King even went so far as to employ the charlatans and the necromancers, who then, as now, professed to hold specifics for all sorts of diseases.

The news spread abroad, and great was the sorrow. The court and the people had become hopeless of his cure, when a fair Italian maiden, professing to be a fortune-teller, appeared before the King, and informed him that she would undertake to restore the Chevalier to his speech. The King would not cast away an opportunity. He summoned Beauregard to his presence, and told him that a physician had come who promised to cure him; but the Chevalier bowed low in silent discredit. The King nodded to the fair stranger, and asked her what she would do.

"Beauregard, my tried and cherished," she said, turning to the Chevalier, "this must endure no longer. *Speak to me!*"

The Chevalier instantly recognized his beloved Aurelia, who had truly loved him, and whose heart had been deeply touched by the proof of his constancy and devotion, and he pronounced her name in rapturous tone as he flew to take her outstretched hand.

Francis was sensibly affected by the romantic event, and he presented his restored favorite with a rich estate at his marriage. C.

SCIENCE.

The explosion on the sun, which was observed by Prof. C. A. Young of Dartmouth College, on the 7th of September last, was in some respects the most remarkable solar disturbance on record. Within the short space of half an hour, an immense protuberance of cloud—consisting of hydrogen gas—on the eastern edge or limb of the sun, increased in height from nearly 100,000 miles to nearly 200,000 miles, its extreme altitude being greater than ever before attained, so far as known, by similar prominences. The velocity of its ascent was 166 miles per second, which also exceeds any previously recorded. Prof. Young speaks of the motion of this vast red-hydrogen cloud as almost perceptible to the eye, and says that the whole phenomenon, as observed by him, suggested the idea of a vast solar explosion. He also mentions, as a suggestive coincidence, the occurrence of a beautiful aurora borealis on the evening of the same day.

The use of a phosphoric signal, in place of the blue light now universally used in the navy, and in the mercantile service, to indicate danger and for other purposes, has been proposed to the Light-house Commissioners of Scotland; and they have just completed a series of experiments with the new light, on their steamer, the *Pharos*. A tin lamp, with a capacity of about half a pint, holds the phosphorated substance. The lamp, being fastened to a piece of wood, can then be thrown into the sea, when a brilliant light at once flashes up, and remains brightly burning for over forty-five minutes. In this manner it may be of very great service as a means of indicating the position of life-buoys at night. The light can also be shown from a ship's mast-head, by floating the lamp in a small vessel of water arranged for the purpose.

The nineteenth of February was the four hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Copernicus, the famous German astronomer, who was the first to develop the true theory of the planetary motions, in opposition to the Ptolemaic hypothesis, which had prevailed for two thousand years before his time. The Society of the Friends of Science, at Posen, in Prussia, celebrated the occasion, with appropriate ceremonies, at the village of Thorn, the native place of the astronomer. Sometime ago this association offered a considerable prize, in money, for the best biography furnished before the first of January, and it is designed to publish this as a memorial.

There is considerable diversity of opinion among astronomers as to the existence or non-existence of spots on the surface of Venus, and the favorable position of that planet for obervation at the present time has led to renewed discussion of the subject. The Astronomer Royal of England states his own experience to be that there are no certain markings visible, and in this opinion he is corroborated by the President of the Royal Astronomical Society. Dr. Huggins has seen dusky spots, but considers them as very uncertain or illusive. Bright appearances, however, like those of craters on the moon, have been distinctly observed by him and others.

A New Jersey lady writes to Prof. Gray of Cambridge, the distinguished botanist, that the leaf of a certain species of Drosera in her garden acts as a fatal fly-catcher, closing with firm grasp around the common house fly, and holding him until he dies. Prof. Gray, in the *American Journal of Science*, speaks of this folding of the leaf of this plant around insects as a new fact to him, and especially interesting. He adds, that the most remarkable things relating to some of these extraordinary fly-catching plants are not yet in print.

A project for connecting the Caspian Sea with the Sea of Azoff, by means of a canal, has been discussed recently by the Russian Geographical Society; but the lack of sufficient data as to the topography of the region between the two seas rendered any determination of the practicability of the plan impossible.

Asbestos is suggested as a good packing material for piston-rods, and will probably meet with favor from engineers, if it is as valuable for the purpose as has been asserted. It is said to be unaffected by friction, or excessive pressure, or high temperature.

The danger of sinking wells near burial grounds is clearly pointed out in a recent article in the *Moniteur Scientifique*, where it is stated that a distance of one hundred and fifty yards from cemeteries is insufficient to secure pure water.

Mr. W. R. Grove, the distinguished English writer on the correlation of forces, who is a prominent lawyer, has been appointed a judge, much to the satisfaction both of scientific men and his brother members of the bar.

Wood soaked in a strong solution of common salt is thereby protected against decay, especially when placed underground. So says Dr. Dingler, in a late number of his *Polytechnisches Journal*.

A new cement, made by exposing red-hot lime to the fumes of sulphur, meets with considerable favor among architects, builders and engineers, in Europe.

At the French port of Cancale, sea-water is used in bread making. The process was described at a late meeting of the Academy of Sciences.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EITREB says: "I have often read your 'Notices to Correspondents,' but never, until now, thought I would need the advice of a disinterested party. I have several admirers; among the number are two only in whom I am interested. One I have loved truly and devotedly, the other I respect and like sincerely. Both have been visiting me for two years, and each have declared their affection for me. My preference, No. 1, says he loves me above all things earthly, and that he is happy only with me, but his actions do not prove it. I never doubted him until, a few months ago, business called him from the city. When he left, he did not call to bid me 'good-by,' or even send me a note to tell me of his departure. He was gone nearly a week before I knew it, and what made it worse, every one was asking me where he had gone, and how long he would be away, to which questions I could only reply, 'I do not know.' He was absent six months, and never wrote me once. Then came back, was only a day and night in town, but too busy to call. In the mean time No. 2 was as frequent in his visits as ever, and told me again and again that he loved me, and asked my hand in marriage. I told him honestly and truly how I felt toward him; that I liked, but did not love him. He said he believed some day I would love him, and he would wait, and, with my consent, still call as a friend, to which I of course could not object, as I thought no one would be in danger but himself, for my dreams then were all of No. 1, who again made his appearance, apologized for his conduct, said he did not mean to neglect me, admitted that he was peculiar in his disposition, but had never ceased to love me, and asked if he could not resume his former place in my heart. I told him I would give him an answer at our next meeting. Now, Mr. Editor, what reply must I make, as I am still interested in him, and much more so in No. 2 than I ever thought possible? No. 2 left the city some four months ago, and has written me regularly once a week, each letter breathing the purest devotion, and in the mean time came once to the city, expressly to see me. What do you think of their conduct, and which the most worthy of my love? Please do not refer me to my parents, for I have consulted them, and they are not willing I should choose either one. They are both perfect gentlemen, and their only objection is, 'they are poor.' Now do not throw this aside, but please answer as soon as convenient." Our decision is that both suitors being poor, that is, unable to support a wife, and both unacceptable to BERTIE'S—beg pardon—EITREB'S parents, and EITREB not knowing her own mind on the subject, the settlement of the question be postponed for six calendar months.

J. M. G. says: "I write you, as thousands before have done, for advice. I am a lawyer by profession, over thirty years old, am fond of the study of the theory of law, but not fond of the details of the practice; have little patience with the incompetent judges who too often succeed in being elected under our present system. I am, however, fond of trade, speculation and active life. I have therefore not succeeded at law as I hoped at first, and as my friends expected. I have not the means to support myself, and my professional income is not sufficient. I am, therefore, compelled to resort to trade and speculation, which is much more to my taste, and in which I am active, vigilant and contented. The two are almost incompatible. Would you advise me to relinquish law altogether, or continue both until I am able to devote my time to one or the other wholly?" While necessity has no law, we are in favor, as a general rule, of one thing at a time. It is bad for a lawyer to be engaged in speculation. We advise you to decide for one or the other, and stick to your choice. If, being a lawyer, you are behind in your trade, no mercy will be shown you. You will never hear the end of the proverb which directs the "cobbler to stick to his last."

TOODLES (Saratoga) says: "Will you be so kind as to answer the following questions through the columns of the *Ledger*? The average height of American ladies? and does a handsome lady have a high, or low forehead?" The strictly true categorical answer to the first would be, We do not know, and to the second, Yes; for we can hardly imagine a handsome lady destitute of a forehead. But we would not seem wanting in respect to any one with a signature so impressive as that of TOODLES. We rise to explain, therefore, that the height is a variable quantity, being several inches greater this year than in 1870. To ascertain how much of the increased elevation is in boots and hat, is a liberty greater than we presume to take. As to the foreheads, we have seen charming ladies whose hair crept down toward the face, and we could not blame it; and equally charming where it retired to a respectful distance.

ALEXIS says: "My difficulty is that I can't bring myself down to study. I have been to school for a number of years, and have foolishly wasted my time, so that now, when I realize the importance of knowledge, I can't remember what I have read over, and am also very deficient in application. The question is, how can I possibly remedy these two defects? The study is mathematics. I am only nineteen, and am quick enough in almost everything except study. If you will be so kind as to answer this, you will confer a great favor." Half the battle is won when you know your defects, and that you should remedy them. Hold yourself resolutely to the work. There is no other way. "Genius is" (often) "application."

OBERLIN STUDENT says: "I have read your answers to correspondents for some time, and now for the first time I am going to ask you to answer a question in which a college professor and myself stand at variance. In the sentence, 'Violinists and other solo performers will be engaged,' what part of speech is Violinists?" In the grammar that formed our youthful speech it was a canon that "a substantive or noun is the name of anything that exists, or of which we have any notion." Now *Violinists* seem to us to come within this definition. We hope the professor says so, as we have profound respect for all professors, and should be sorry to differ from one.

SOUTH AFRICA (Steubenville, Ohio) says: "Please let me know, through your answers to correspondents, the best route to the diamond fields of South Africa; about what the passage money would be, and with a man who had some little capital and didn't fear labor, if the investment would pay. In a word, please let me have what general information you have, and oblige an old reader of the *Ledger*." We cannot undertake to give information of this kind, for many and obvious reasons. Why wander to the diamond fields of South Africa, when, with less risk, and more comfort and safety, competence can be secured on this continent?

H. S. (Newark, Ohio) says: "Why do writers of books which they expect American people to buy, put so many words of foreign languages in them as to greatly injure the appreciation of them by the common reader?" Your simplicity is charming. How else are we to know the learning of the writers? If persons would own up—like you—to their ignorance, it would make some difference; but very few will do this. There is a great charm to many, in unknown tongues. At the same time we think authors would show more taste by writing English, or interpreting, if they air their foreign vocabulary.

STUDENT (New York) says: "I am a young man eighteen years of age. I have received a fair English education, but have a great desire of improving my mind. Having no guardian or friend whose advice I can bespeak on such matters, I turn to you for assistance. Will you please inform me what course to pursue under the circumstances?" You do not state the circumstances. If you are employed during the day, we recommend you to study a good geography, with maps, and to read and understand a good history of America and then of England, and having done this, write to us again.

EXCALIBAR (New Orleans) writes for information as to the authorship of the following lines:

"A murmur in the violet vales,"
"A glory in the goblin dell,"

and certain other matters of about equal practical interest. We do not know these lines, and if the entire poem be like them, except that we should desire to gratify EXCALIBAR, we should never feel much interest in it. EXCALIBAR must not be discouraged. Matters of solid practical interest are rarely passed by in these columns.

A. W. G. (New Albion) says: "As you have answered a great many questions, I presume that mine will not trouble you very much. Will you please tell me something about the Kindergarten system of teaching, and if one can get books describing it?" A Kindergarten is a kind of infant school, and every teacher of one carries it on according to his or her own notions of such things. Object lessons, music, calisthenics, and whatever conveys instruction in the most pleasing and least wearisome ways, are among its features. There is no book on the subject that we are aware of.

V. D. V. (Chicago, Ill.) says: "Will you be kind enough to inform me, through the columns of your valuable paper, what is an American silver quarter worth, bearing date 1796; also a silver dollar dated 1798. I believe there are people in Philadelphia who buy up old coins of this kind. By informing me, you will greatly oblige." There is no standard of value for such coins, the amount paid being usually determined by the number and wealth of the competitors at the auction to which they are commonly submitted.

PAINTER (Neenah, Wis.) says: "Having noticed in your correspondents' column, a reference to a work on ornamental painting, I wish to inquire where it can be obtained and the price of the same. Please answer in your column of correspondence as soon as possible, and oblige." Any respectable bookseller can procure you the work from New York. An edition of Ruskin's works has been issued here. Its price is probably about two or three dollars.

R. E. G. (Middletown) says: "In Rev. R. Harcourt's 'Rambles Through the British Isles,' he says St. Patrick was born in Scotland. Other writers say he was born in France. Will you be kind enough to inform me who is right?" The weight of authority is in favor of his birth on the 5th April, 373, near Dunbarton, in Scotland. There are seven lives of him in Colgan's Collection. The Annals of the Four Masters are also an authority.

F. S. (South Waterford) asks if a certain insurance company, which he names, is in good standing. He must get his information elsewhere. If we were to recommend any particular insurance company, we should be regarded by many as virtually endorsing its responsibility, a thing which we do not care to do, more especially after the recent failure of so many companies formerly in excellent repute.

G. M. (Delaware county, Pa.) is engaged to a young lady whose mother is opposed to the match. If you have won the daughter, you ought to be able to win the mother over, also.

NELLIE has seen a young gentleman at church with whose looks she is greatly pleased, and she wishes to know whether she should bow to him at once, or wait for an introduction. Wait.

VIOLET (Boston) loves a young gentleman who has stopped calling on her, and she doesn't know what to do. Stop loving him.

ROGER (Nashville, Tenn.) inquires about a gift enterprise advertised in this city. All such are swindles.

FELIX (Unitah, Utah) says: "Having been a subscriber and reader of your paper for nearly sixteen years, and from what I have seen in your 'Notices to Correspondents,' feeling assured that an answer from you can be depended on, I make bold to ask you my first questions. My case is as follows: I am an Englishman by birth. I landed in Boston in July, 1856. I was employed by a respectable company in Boston, from the time of landing to early in 1860. I then left Boston, to work for a portion of the same company, who owned a manufactory in Brooklyn, the city adjoining yours. While residing there, no one objected to my voting or filling any of the duties of a citizen. During the war I came to Utah, where I have found myself this last two or three years debarred from voting. I have now my first papers, and will soon be a full citizen. My questions are as follows: Can a citizen, with his first papers only, act as a school trustee? Is he liable to serve on a jury in criminal cases? In the act of resistance to an officer of the peace by a prisoner, is a person who has only his first papers compelled to aid and assist in the arrest of said prisoner? Can a person with only his first papers homestead or preëmpt land? Or has he forfeited the rights of a citizen of his native country, without gaining any rights from the land of his adoption for a period of five years, till he can secure his full papers?" The questions of voting, serving as school trustee, doing jury duty, helping to keep the peace, and such like local matters, are determined by local laws, that is, by the laws of the State or Territory in which a person resides. As to them, you must seek information of some lawyer in Utah. The preëmption of the public lands, or the acquisition of a farm under the Homestead Law, comes under the regulation of the Federal Government; and Congress has enacted that any alien who has declared his intention to become a citizen, may have the benefit of the Homestead Law just the same as though he had become fully naturalized. As to your rights in this country during the five years of probation, they are all that you require for protection to your life, property, business and social welfare.

M. D. (Fredonia, Kansas) says: "Will you be so kind as to inform me which party originated the law to shield bond holders from paying taxes on their wealth? I am a Radical Republican, but if that party is the father of that grand swindle, then I shall be a Radical Democrat. The very men who should bear the burden of taxation are entirely exempt from it, but receive thirteen cents interest on their bonds in gold from government, who pay it with the poor man's money. The reason this strikes me so forcibly is this: I own a house and lot assessed at five hundred dollars. My taxes this year were twenty dollars and fifty cents. My neighbor, who is wealthy in government bonds, pays nothing. Is that right? If it is, I would like to have some one explain it satisfactorily to me. Kind sir, you will oblige many readers of the *Ledger* if you will answer this." It is natural for you to feel aggrieved at the state of things which you believe to exist, and we heartily sympathize with you. But have you stated the case correctly? Do not your rich neighbors have to pay taxes on *their* houses, and on their incomes, and on all manner of things? The rich are complaining from one end of the land to the other over the exorbitant taxes which they have to pay. As to the exemption of government bonds from taxation, *that* is a part of the original agreement which the government made with buyers of its bonds, in order to get them to buy at all. Do you not believe in the government's keeping its word and fulfilling its contracts? Your feelings lead you into exaggeration. You speak of bond holders getting thirteen *per cent.* interest, in gold, *per annum*. We know of no bonds which bear such interest as that. Six *per cent.*, in gold, is the highest rate of interest paid on government bonds in this part of the world. It is to be hoped that the time will come when we shall all be relieved of the worst features of taxation, not only by the Federal, but also by State and municipal authorities.

A WIDOWED MOTHER writes: "I have been taking the *Ledger* for sixteen years, and never have troubled you for advice; but I feel that I would like to consult you now on a matter of great importance to me. I have a son twenty-two years of age. I bound him to a trade. When he was eighteen he became so good for nothing that his employer dismissed him, after keeping him a year and a half. I then sent him to another man at the same employment, where he worked for one year, and gave it up without giving notice either to me or his employer. He was idle more than a year, during which time I had to support and clothe him. I then paid his passage to California, from which place he kept writing begging letters for me to send for him, and promising that he would do better in future. So I paid his passage back again. He has been home now four months, and seems to have no idea of doing anything. He is most morose and disobliging to me, and worthless in every respect, and being a widow with a helpless family to support and small means, I beg of you to advise me what to do with him, as I have no reliable friend to depend on for advice. I await your answer in your next paper." We have pondered on this case of an unfortunate widow and an ungrateful young man, and must confess that it is difficult to decide what to do with such a son. Speak to him frankly and kindly of the necessity both to himself and to you that he should exert himself, and point out to him what he should do. If he continues deaf to such appeals from an affectionate mother, he would seem to be incorrigible.

IN DOUBTS says: "I have three questions to ask you, and I am almost afraid you will think them too foolish to notice at all; but if you will be so kind as to answer them, I will be much obliged to you. First, then, as to the proper way of writing my visiting cards. Second, in offering oysters, coffee and cake, with all kinds of fruit and nuts, to company of an evening, would you serve the coffee with the oysters, or with the cake after you were through with the oysters? The fruit and nuts I know should be brought on after you are through with everything else. Now for my third question, and the only sensible one of all. Having nothing but a common-school education, with no accomplishments at all, and not naturally a good conversationalist, or very intelligent, I would like to know if there is anything I can read or study that would improve my mind, so that I should be able to converse with a little more ease than I do now. I can't talk with strangers to save my life hardly, and for that reason I don't like to go into company, or receive calls from strangers. Can't you help me, please?" 1st. If there is no one of the family and name in your neighborhood, write on the cards simply, "Mrs. Smith;" if there is a mother-in-law, then write "Mrs. H. S. Smith." 2d. Oysters, coffee and fruit in succession. 3d. Read the ordinary instructive books, travels, the newspapers, and all the persons who call on you. We think it likely that you are a most interesting and entertaining person. You can be a good listener, which will make you agreeable to half the world.

SUBSCRIBER (Pickens Court House, S. C.) says: "Please answer me, through the columns of your valuable paper, whether the word 'contemporary,' or 'cotemporary,' is used in any other sense than as applicable to two authors, or any other persons following the same trade or avocation at the same time? For instance, am I not contemporary with every man now living, be he king, president, or philosopher? This question has arisen between myself and a friend, who contends that the word cannot be applied in this indiscriminate manner, but must be confined to persons following the same avocation. Were not George Washington and the most obscure man of his time and age contemporaries? We abide your decision." In a general sense, your position is the correct one. A contemporary is one who lives at the same time with another; therefore, whoever lived while Washington was alive was Washington's contemporary, and Washington was also his contemporary. But there is a restricted sense in which your friend's position may perhaps be considered as correct. It has become customary to speak of persons as contemporaries who, besides living at the same time, may, by their eminence, their crimes, or their pursuits, be strikingly compared or contrasted with one another.

CALIFORNIAN asks: "Why is this century called the nineteenth century, when it is among the eighteen hundreds? Why is it not the eighteenth? What is the origin of the Albinos? Are they a distinct race?" Why is a person who is eighteen years old, and going on nineteen, said to be in his nineteenth year? It is simply because he *is* in his nineteenth year, and when that year is completed, and he becomes fully nineteen years old, he immediately enters upon his twentieth year. The same truth applies to the centuries. The eighteenth century was completed many years ago, and we are now working our way through the nineteenth. The Albinos are not a distinct race of beings. Any person of a preternatural whiteness of the skin and hair, and a peculiar redness of the iris and pupil of the eye is an Albino. These phenomena are not confined to the offspring of any particular race or tribe, but occur irregularly in different parts of the world, and among different races.

MECHANIC & CO. say: "We have a question to ask, which, if you will have the kindness to explain fully in your answers to correspondents, we will be very grateful. The question, or explanation, has puzzled us for several years. It is as follows: 'Mind may act upon mind, though bodies be far divided.' Now, sir, will you please give us a full and clear explanation of that line, which may be found in Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy; and as we are not versed in metaphysics, we would be glad to know whether Mr. Tupper means that if we wish to see an absent friend, our wish will bring him, or how affect him, or what else?" We presume you never met Mr. Tupper, whose mind produced this line—without any great effort probably—yet his mind has been acting on yours for years, as you say. He is not usually very profound, and we take this to be one of the class of human experiences to which he alludes—"only this, and nothing more."

STELLA (New Orleans) says: "Inclosed you will please find an advertisement which appeared in one of our daily papers. Can you ascertain for me whether there is any reality about said advertisement, or whether it is a humbug? Your attention to the above will greatly oblige one of your constant readers." The advertisement is of a "lottery," with "a prize for every ticket," and with $1,287,148 to distribute in cash gifts, certified for by quotations from leading New York papers. The advertisement is real; but we do not know the "Merchants and Bankers" who issue it, and on general grounds advise you not to put money in it, or anything like it.

H. T. (Shelbyville, Ind.) says: "In looking over a paper the other day I came across the following sentence: 'They will knock your man down for $10, sand-bag him for $100, and pistol him for $1,000.' Now what I want to know is, what did the paper mean by *sand-bag* him? What does sand-bag mean?" A sand-bag is a small bag of soft leather or cloth, about as big around as one's wrist, and from eighteen inches to two feet in length, filled with sand, which is used as a deadly weapon. A blow with it on the back of a man's neck is apt to be fatal, and it leaves no mark.

SARAH says: "I am a country girl, and in my eighteenth year. I have been receiving the attentions of a young man for over one year, who loves me dearly, and I fully reciprocate his affections. He has offered me his hand in marriage, if I will wait two years for him. I do not believe in long engagements. Please advise me what course to pursue, and I shall abide by it." Two years we do not consider a very long time to wait for a nice young man.

⁂ Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.